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*The Pleasures of the Past*



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## THE GREAT FILM COWBOYS RIDE AGAIN

National Telefilm Associates, Inc. is syndicating *The Great Film Cowboys*, a package of 26 one-hour television programs starring Roy Rogers as the host. Each episode features a famous star in one of his action western adventures originally released during the 30s and 40s.

With five Roy Rogers films, the series includes Tex Ritter, Wild Bill Elliott, Rex Allen, Bester Crabbe, Johnny Mack Brown, Bob Livingston, Allan "Rocky" Lane, Hoot Gibson, Lash LaRue, Monte Hale, Tom Tyler, Bob Steele, Sunset Carson, Eddie Dean, Don "Red" Barry, Eddie Dew and John Wayne.

Besides talking about the cowboys and telling how the movies were made, Roy Rogers, as the host, also shows western memorabilia at his Roy Rogers Museum in Apple Valley, California, where his introductory remarks were filmed in color.

Some episodes also include behind-the-scenes film, showing the cowboy stars making these movies. The footage has never been seen before.



## LAST OF THE BIG TIME OPERATORS

The tiny hamlet of El Paso, Illinois, last hold-out of the friendly human central switchboard operator, is finally succumbing to the miracle of technology—the dial telephone. As of December 7, the voices of Emma, Fernie, Clio and other operators will be replaced by the hums, beeps, buzzes and other decidedly non-human sounds the rest of the country has had to put up with for years.

The reason? El Paso's population has grown somewhat and the town needs a more efficient telephone system. The town's business community became fed up with having to explain to their out-of-town clients the intricacies of their antiquated communications system.

But one aspect of the operator system will not change, however. The pay phone in front of the El Paso Telephone Company office will still be free from 3 to 6 P.M. so school children can call their parents for a ride home on a rainy day.

## A NEW YARN

Taking advantage of the current mania for knitting, needlepoint and other "do-it-yourself" crafts, Vermont's Shelburne Spinners manufacture their own home-spun yarn for mail-order sales to would-be craftspeople. So the spinning wheel, that age-old piece of Americana is being commercially revived.

The process of converting raw fleece into yarn by sorting, oiling, carding, and finally, spinning, hasn't changed much since the 17th century when the first spinning wheels came to America with the Pilgrims, and natural dyes are still used for coloring. The Shelburne Spinners, a loosely-knit cooperative, is giving Vermont's dwindling sheep industry a shot in the arm,



and jobs to state welfare recipients.

Yarn can be obtained in various size skeins by writing to Shelburne Spinners, Box 651, Burlington, Vermont 05401.

## SINGING SENNETT

If you happen to be in New York and are thinking of catching a Broadway musical while you're there, *Mabel And Mack* is an absolute must. Starring Robert Preston and Bernadette Peters, this musical deals with the life and times of Mack Sennett, whose zany comedies replete with bathing beauties and Keystone Cops delighted movie audiences in the heyday of silent films during the early 30's.

Playing at the Majestic Theatre, *Mabel And Mack* opened to favorable reviews and an even better response by theatre-goers. This is one musical that's going to be around for a long time.



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Correction: In issue No. 2, Volume 1, the caption on page 45 should have read: Earl Faye and Basil Rathbone in an extended scene from the picture *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938).

## MARCH OF TIME

Bristol, Connecticut, a city that once had 173 clock manufacturing plants within its limits, is about to shut down its last "time factory." Ingraham Industries, now a division of the McGraw-Edison Company in Bristol has announced that it will close its doors within a month of this writing.

Founded 143 years ago by Elias Ingraham, the firm made clocks to be sold throughout the country by traveling peddlers. They started making dollar pocket watches shortly after World War II, and presently they have been turning out other timing devices and various electronic gadgets.

Labor shortages and a major drop in orders are the reasons given for the shut-down. However, the American Clock Museum, founded by Dudley and Edward Ingraham, descendants of Elias, is still in Bristol as a timeless monument.



## SOCKIN' IT TO 'EM

The newest fad to hit the campuses the past year or two isn't that new at all. The Sock Hop—complete with 50s rock-n-roll and 50s fashions—has replaced the sit-in, the extracurricular activity of the 60s, as the primary form of amusement in colleges and high schools today.

The reason for this recurrence isn't too difficult to guess. The current generation of students are too young to remember what growing up in the 50s was really like. Films such as *American Graffiti* and *The Lords Of Flatbush* and the Broadway musical *Grease* have placed the 50s in the same category with other past decades that have symbolized a lost innocence.

## IN MEMORIAM

Walter Brennan, long-time character actor and the first film performer to win three Oscars (*Come And Get It*, 1936, *Kentucky*, 1938, *Western*, 1940) died on September 21 in Othard, California. He was 90 years old. Brennan had appeared in films, most of them Westerns, since 1923. He started his career as an extra for \$7.50 a day. He also starred in four television series, the most well-known being *The Real McCoys* where he played the crusty head of a hillbilly clan transplanted to California. The other series were *The Tycoon*, *The Guns of Will Sonnett*, and *To Rome With Love*.

Cliff Arquette, better known to TV viewers as Charley Weaver, the rustic old philosopher, died September 23 in Los Angeles. The son of a vaudeville team, Arquette literally grew up with show business. His own career began when he was 14 years old when he dropped out of high school to organize a band named Cliff Arquette and his Purple Derbies. The character of Charley Weaver was born on the *Fibber McGee and Molly* radio show, where he played the role of the Oldtimer. The present Weaver character first appeared on television on NBC's show *Dave N Chorley* which Arquette put together with Dave Willock. He retired from show business in 1955 but was soon brought back by Jack Paar who featured him as a regular guest on his show. He appeared on various other TV shows, and in 1966, became a regular on the quiz show *Hollywood Squares*.

Ed Sullivan, a Sunday night TV fixture for 25 years, died in New York on October 13 at the age of 72. Among the more prominent celebrities who made their TV debut on his show were Bob Hope, the Beatles, Liza Minnelli, Rudolf Nureyev and countless others. In addition to his Sunday night variety show, Sullivan also wrote a column, *Little Old New York* for the *New York News*.



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# WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

By Carole Wendt





*Jane Fonda grew from the beautiful baby below to the beautiful babe above. Page 8, Ron Galella poses at four with his brother Vinnie and pursues his favorite subject, Jackie, down a New York street.*

## Does it help to know what you want to do early in life? Some famous celebrities tell all.

**T**hose who thought that Jane Fonda must have been a beautiful baby can see here that they were right. Even then, though, she was showing the world she could stand by herself. She loved horses, she says and, at five, could ride by herself. About that time, her greatest ambition was to be a cowboy: not a cowgirl, a cowboy, she insists. When she and her younger brother Peter played together, her favorite game was what she called "cowboy movie." Once he agreed to play, she would pull rank and cast herself as the hero.



Bon Galella, the definitive paparazzo, shown left, in determined pursuit of his once favorite subject, Jackie Kennedy, said, "When I was little, I wanted to be an artist. I made drawings in crayon and hung them all over the walls. My mother was so proud. She was a seamstress, an artist too, in her way; my father was the craftsman; he was a cabinet maker. I guess you could say I combined the art and the craft in photography."

The adult Galella has taken thousands of pictures of celebrities but as a camera subject himself, he showed an early shyness. Here, at 4, pictured with his younger brother Vinnie, he posed stiffly and avoided





instrument for him. "I did know that I wanted to play music for lovers, not acrobats. I thought the violin made a romantic sound and I was a very romantic kid. I wanted to play the kind of music that people would dance to cheek to cheek." Though the violin gradually became not much more than a prop or baton with which to lead the orchestra, Guy Lombardo grew up to provide some of the most durable popular music in the country.



One night a little girl went to hear Lily Pons sing. It was a momentous evening because the little girl made a decision; she was going to become an opera star. Her name was Beverly Sills. "I had started singing at the age of three and at twelve, when I saw Lily Pons, I knew that I had to become an opera star some day. My parents were from Europe however, and my father was sure that the only way to get ahead in this country was to be well—edu-

*Guy Lombardo, the boy (12) and the man. Below, Beverly Sills the opera star.*

the camera's eye. Despite his reputation for extreme persistence in getting his pictures, he insisted, "I'm really very shy; if it weren't for my camera, I'd never dare approach a celebrity."

Shy or not, Galella's work supplies a need, and he knows the market. "If I could get just one exclusive shot of Howard Hughes, I could make \$100,000 with it."



For four decades now, Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians have been helping millions of Americans welcome the New Year. Their arrangement of "Auld Lang Syne" makes New Year's Eve official. As a boy in Ontario, Canada, Guy was part of a large gregarious Italian family. His father, who loved music, was determined that each child learn to play an instrument, so he parcelled out the assignments. Younger brother Carmen was to master the flute and Guy tuned up on the violin. At that time Guy knew he wanted to play music; though he wasn't sure the violin was the right





## Many of the stars chose their professions early, but not Max Morath; he wanted to become an astronaut and be the first man on the moon.

ated. He said I had to have a college education at the state teacher's college, but Mother helped me break the news to Dad. The night she was going to tell him about my plans, she made a delicious meal to soften him up. She said, 'The child' (they always called me 'the child') 'the child doesn't want to go to college.' Dad was firm; 'The child will go to college and be smart.' 'No,' Mother said, 'This one, she'll be an opera star.'

Recently, New York Times Music Critic Harold C. Schonberg said of Ms. Sills that she sang with "total command." No surprise... not from a woman who, at 12, knew she would grow up to become an opera star. And she was right.



At nine she played the piano, ate too much, and displayed the beginnings of a now-famous flirtatious side glance at the camera. Today, she's credited with knowing and telling more than anyone else about Hollywood's inside stories. Her television features are avidly watched across the country and the popularity of her newspaper and magazine articles about the doings of the great and near-great rivals that of Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper. The kind of determination it took to create today's Rona Barrett did not come easily.

"As a child I had a mysterious and crippling form of a disease similar to muscular dystrophy. One day when I was about five years old, I was walking home from school when a bunch of kids carrying long sticks followed me and surrounded me as I reached my home. Along with the taunting and ridiculing, they began poking and prodding me with their sticks, calling me 'fatty' and 'cripple.' I was helpless to fight back and the incident filled me with such rage, I was determined to do something with my life, so that no one could treat me like that again. I had three plans: (1) to become a research doctor and find a cure for



*From a chubby childhood in Queens to Hollywood stardom as the leading showbiz gossip, Rona Barrett trekked to glory*

my disease; or (2) a lawyer so that I could maybe help people who felt as inferior as I did; or (3) go into show business—to do what I certainly didn't know. I knew I could never be a dancer, but if I could get into the business, I might become famous. I felt if you were famous and rich, no one could touch you. If no one could touch you, you could never be hurt."



Wherever ragtime piano music is being played in this country, chances are it's Max Morath, Colorado-born ex-actor who's playing it. He first became interested in ragtime when he was hired to play period music for melodramas;

those oldtime "ricky ticky" sounds fascinated him. He studied its history and ultimately ended up with a popular night club act that resulted in a television series in 1960. Since that time, the sound of his ragtime rhythms has crisscrossed the country via radio, concerts, records, and television shows. His interest in the past seems ironic though, since as a child, he apparently dreamed of a then undiscovered future: "I wanted to be an astronaut. Even as a child, I wanted to go into science and was convinced that in our lifetime we'd go to the moon, and I wanted to do it. I majored in physics my first two years in college, and I'm really still interested."



Max Morath, ragtime pianist, then and now. Below is Rodney Dangerfield who didn't get no respect then either.



Max Morath may not have gotten to the moon, but he did become a star.

Comedian, talk show habitue, and restaurateur Rodney Dangerfield claims that even when he was a young boy—all dressed up in suit, vest, white shirt, tie, and modish cap—he still didn't get no respect. "When I was a kid I wanted to be an ice skater. But I got no respect with that either. The time I asked my old man if I could go ice skating on the lake, he told me to wait till it gets warmer."

Henry Fonda's long and distinguished career began quite early; though his decision to become a professional actor came several years after he first appeared on the stage. As he put it himself: "This picture was taken when I was five and making my first stage appearance at an Omaha Junior League pageant. I'm afraid I can't identify the leading lady. But I didn't immediately decide then that I wanted to be an actor. I did want to be a writer and the first time my

name hit the paper was when I was ten years old. I had written a story called "The Mouse" and my grandfather was so proud he had it published in a Nebraska newspaper. From then on, I knew that I wanted to be a journalism major. But I had to work my way through school and the outside jobs left me too exhausted to pay much attention to my school work. So I dropped out. It was after that that Mrs. Dorothy Brando, a friend of my mother's—talked me into going on the stage at the Omaha Community Theatre. And that's when I discovered how exciting the life of an actor could be. I didn't want to be a reporter any more... unless it was a good role in a play.



Vidal Sassoon, of the geometric hair style of '65 and the "Greek Goddess" look of 1967, cuts and styles the hair of such celebrated heads as Candice Bergen, Liza Minnelli, Julie Christie, Catherine Deneuve, and Jane Fonda. Even men fight for appointments with



To be an ice skater, a writer and a soccer player were their dreams, but they became famous in other fields—comedy, acting and hairdressing.



*Henry Fonda at five with unidentified actress and as the remarkable success he is today.*



him; some who have made it are Dick Cavett, Kirk Douglas, Joel Grey, and Richard Harris. Popular stereotypes of hair dressers aside, husband and father Vidal Sassoon was an aspiring athlete when he was a little boy in London:

"Ever since I can remember, I always wanted to be a soccer player. Nothing gave me more pleasure than playing soccer in the streets and fields of London." When he was older, he said he wanted to become an architect but family finances could not accommodate such a lofty ambition: "My mother [pictured here with six-year-old Vidal] apprenticed me to Professor Cohen's hairdressing establishment. I started there as a shampoo boy and worked my way up." With Vidal Sassoon salons proliferating all over the world, it would seem that the would-be soccer player and ex-shampoo boy did all right for himself.



*Vidal Sassoon, left, and with mother*



# TENNIS, ANYONE?

By Jay Acton



Once called the Sport of Kings, tennis is now the sport of just about everybody. It is the fastest growing participation sport around (unless you count backgammon), and the boom in spectator interest is threatening to change the whole mood of the game. No longer do you find the sedate, white tennis balls of yore; now they are a bright day-glo yellow. And the white tennis outfit seems to be destined to go the way of the Dodo bird, for with the rise in popularity of the sport, television has proposed a whole new spectrum of color for the game—white doesn't show up well on television. There is even talk of moving the famous Forest Hills Tournament due to the overflow crowds attending matches, and the resultant distaste with which the residents of that quiet community view the invading masses. It looks as if the tennis—which was in fast disappearing. But never fear, tennis will survive. In fact, it has been constantly changing since its inception.

The exact origins of the game now known as tennis are obscure.

But we do know that some form of this racquet sport was played in France as early as 1100. The game was extremely popular and was at that time dubbed "the sport of kings, noblemen and merchants." Historians say the game was introduced to England by the beginning of the fifteenth century.

There are other tennis historians who trace the game's derivations back further. The Greeks and Romans played a game called "sphaeristeris" (the word means courtyard). Others say that forms of the sport were also played in Egypt and Persia. But it is from England that the beginnings of modern tennis can be definitely traced.

The early English courts were simply marked out in extant courtyards and quadrangles, which no doubt, accounts for the game's perimeters today. The net in those days consisted of a cord or rope strung across the center of the court. A fringe of tassels which hung down from the cord prevented the ball from passing underneath it.

Racquets had shorter handles and were not strung as tightly as present day models. Players also wore gloves on their racquet hands to give their strokes extra firmness. At first, balls were made from tightly rolled and stitched cloth. By the sixteenth century, however, the balls were made of white leather and were stuffed with feathers, wool and animal hair.

The French import soon caught on with the British monarchs and they were delighted with the game. Henry VII, Henry VIII and Charles II all bounced around the court. Of Charles, Samuel Pepys wrote in his famous diary of 1664: "Saw the King play at tennis and others; but to see how the King's play is extolled, without any cause



at all, was a loathsome sight, though sometimes indeed, he did play very well and deserved to be commended; but such open flattery is beastly."

In England during the early 1800s the court variety of tennis was played almost exclusively. Court tennis demanded a walled and roofed enclosure 110 feet long by 38 feet wide, with a five foot high center net. Today, there are less than forty such enclosures throughout the world, though purists still contend that court tennis is "real tennis."

The development of modern lawn tennis is credited to Major Walter Clopton Wingfield, an enterprising Englishman, who introduced his version of the game, which he called "Sphairistike," at Nantelyed in December of 1873.



Wingfield's game was played on grass, with a badminton net and a ball borrowed from the English game called "Fives." He patented his game as "a new and improved portable court for playing the ancient game of tennis. Wingfield's game was an immediate success and he licensed a manufacturer to produce racquets, balls, and nets. He also published a book which contained the game's rules. Perhaps the most striking difference in



*Big Bill Tilden, whose court theatrics delighted tennis fans during the 1920's.*

Wingfield's game, when compared to the modern variety, is that his court was in the shape of an hourglass, with the net strung across the pinched middle.

By the late 1870's, the hourglass court had been replaced by the present-day rectangular court. In 1877, the first Wimbledon tournament was held. Twenty-two players entered the competition after paying "one pound, one shilling" for the privilege. The winner was S.W. Core, the racquets champion of Harrow. The year 1881 saw the shortest final on record when Willie Renshaw defeated the Reverend J. T. Hartley in 37 minutes. In all, Renshaw

won seven men's singles titles—a record which still stands.

Tennis took a trip to America via Bermuda in 1874. That winter, Miss Mary Ewing Outerbridge of Staten Island made her annual trip



to Bermuda. Miss Outerbridge was well-heeled and traveled in only the best social circles. In addition to her usual holiday diversions of swimming, croquet and dancing, Miss Outerbridge latched onto a new sport.

Some British Army Officers had set aside part of the soccer pitch, put down chalk lines, set up a net and were using a couple of paddles that resembled snow shoes to bat a ball back and forth across the net.

It turned out that the officers were friends of Major Wingfield and when they had drawn duty in Bermuda, they brought their tennis equipment along. It is reported that Miss Outerbridge stood for hours watching the strange game. Finally the courtly officers invited her to try her hand at the game.

They packed up a parcel of equipment for her, so that she might continue her playing in the U.S. A puzzled group of customs inspectors seized the racquets, balls, and net and refused to give them back until one of Miss Outerbridge's brothers came down and explained to them that the implements were not to be used for any nefarious undertaking.

The following spring, Miss Outerbridge got her brothers to set aside space at the Staten Island Cricket Club to set up a tennis court. At first, no one would play with Miss Outerbridge with the exception of her devoted brothers. Ironically, the game was considered "skisified," a pastime for women only.

Tennis spread to a number of



widely diverse geographic points in the U.S.—first through New England (the national championships were held at the Newport Casino from 1881 to 1915 when they were finally moved to Forest Hills) and then along the West Coast to places like Santa Monica, California.

The first genuine tennis superstar was Big Bill Tilden, who came to prominence in the early 1920s. Big Bill got his name from his mammoth battles with Little Bill Johnston, who had dominated the tennis world from 1915 to 1919. But by the early twenties, Tilden clearly had the upper hand, and it



*Don Budge was the first pro player to win the top four world championships in 1935.*

was not long before Johnston faded from the scene. Today, only the really serious students of tennis history can tell you who he was.

William Tatem Tilden II was a frustrated Shakespearean actor. But many of those who watched him on a tennis court during his career would say that his talents as a thespian were not wasted. Tilden always moved quickly, cat-like, for the ball. He had a booming backhand and forehand. His serve was murderous.

His game was always exciting. His inventive repertoire of shots kept his steadiest opponent constantly off-balance. His matches

were spectator delights. He was an early Bobby Riggs.

If an official or linesman made a bad call—for or against him—Tilden would peer long and hard at the offender. If the call went for him, he was known to dump the next point to his opponent. One time, a call upset him so much, he picked up his gear and left the court, defaulting an important match.

In the preliminary rounds of a tournament against unseasoned players, he'd drop a set or two, just to let the tension build. Once the stands were packed with eager fans, Tilden would storm back to take the match and the gallery would leave with its money's worth.

In the late 1930s, another tennis superstar came into prominence. The redheaded rocket's name was Don Budge. Budge was the complete player; he had mastered all the strokes of the game and he covered the court like Tilden with grace and ease. In 1938 he won the Grand Slam of tennis—the U.S., Wimbledon, French and Italian Championships—a feat no one—even Tilden—had accomplished before. Not for a quarter of a century would anyone equal that feat.

Budge turned pro at the age of 23 in 1930. Playing indoors gave him trouble at first, but he quickly established himself as the top player in the play-for-pay ranks. In the early forties he joined the Air Force. After World War II he tried to rejoin the pro circuit but he was only a shadow of his former self. After a few months, he retired, beaten by none other than Bobby Riggs, a top player in those days before turning to his present-day theatrics. Riggs said of Budge: "He was the most devastating and impressive player I had ever seen."

Tennis after World War II was a different proposition. Pancho Gonzales, Rod Laver, John Newcombe, Stan Smith, and Jimmy Connors among dozens of others, brought the game into the modern age. On the women's side, Althea Gibson, followed by Margaret Court Smith, Billie Jean King and Chris Evert, ushered in the contemporary age of tennis for women. Indeed, the sport has come a long way from Mary Ewing Outerbridge's foray to Bermuda in 1874.





## CIRCUS!

By Jean Guck

From ancient Rome to modern New York, it's the longest running show ever.

**T**True or false: the circus, with its colorful parades, spectacular performances and all the attendant ballyhoo associated with the Big Top is a uniquely American phenomenon. If you answered "true," then it's obvious that you don't know your ancient history as well as you should. The circus, with all its pomp and pageantry, was conceived and christened in ancient Rome, the nation that also gave us imperialism and Latin. The term "circus" originally referred to the Circus Maximus where chariot races and other athletic events were held in its circular

arena. It took on its present meaning when Roman emperors, desperate to enhance their popularity, routinely staged five-day extravaganzas—admission free—consisting of every variety of amusement available. The acts themselves weren't new; acrobats, high-wire walkers and equestrian acts had been around in various forms since civilization itself. The novelty lay in combining all of these performances into one gigantic spectacle, the like of which the ancient world had never seen.

When the Roman Empire declined, the circus went with it. Then in 1770 it was resurrected, this time in England. Circuses and publicity have always gone hand in hand, and the first modern-day circus began as a publicity stunt. An enterprising young cavalry sergeant named Phillip Astley opened a riding academy in

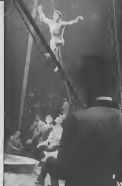
London and thought of an original way of advertising it. A skilled trick rider, Astley decided to give a one-night demonstration of his talents, the idea being to attract potential students for his academy. But the publicity stunt did better than the product it promoted; thousands flocked to see him do headstands, somersaults and jump through hoops without a fall—a sort of Evel Knievel on horseback. It wasn't long before Astley junked the academy and kept the show, adding acrobats, tumblers, a tight-rope walker, a clown, and a troupe of dancing dogs. The basic premise was the same as the Roman emperors'—put several different acts under one roof and presto! instant success.

Twelve years after Astley's debut as a showman, Charles Hughes, a rider in his troupe, broke off with Astley and started his own show. It

*Of the nearly 200 shows trodding the country at the turn of the century, Barnum & Bailey and the Sells Brothers were the best known. (top, left & right) Among the top attractions were death-defying aerialists like the one shown at center, and Jumbo, the elephant whose purchase caused an outcry in England.*



Acrobatic feats of all kinds have been keeping audiences on the edge of their seats since the beginning of civilization. Animal acts had blonder origins, however, when the Romans would routinely throw Christians and other undesirable (to the Romans) into a pit of ferocious beasts.



Before radio and movies, the circus was the only entertainment available to most rural Americans.



was Hughes who resurrected the original Roman name, calling his production The Royal Circus, advertising equestrian feats never performed since Roman times. He took his show on tour to Paris and other European cities, where it was so well received that one of Hughes' riders, John Bill Ricketts, took the circus to the New World.

On April 3, 1793, in Philadelphia, the Royal Circus made its American debut. Ricketts' show rapidly gained popularity in this new country—so much so that, instead of returning to England as planned, he stayed on and built a permanent amphitheatre in Philadelphia to house the show. The following year, he took his troupe on tour, playing to packed houses in Boston, New York and Baltimore. The success of our country's first circus was short-lived, however. Fire destroyed Ricketts' amphitheatre in 1799 and, lacking a permanent base for his show, he

sailed back to England where his ship was lost at sea.

But Ricketts' is the one who added the first uniquely American feature to the circus—the side show. It seems that President George Washington was an avid fan of the Royal Circus. An excellent horseman himself, Washington complimented Ricketts on the equestrian expertise of his troupe, and they soon became good friends. Ricketts, looking for a gimmick that would wow the American market, offered Washington \$150 to exhibit the horse he had ridden as Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army. Washington accepted the offer and the first side show was born.

During the first half of the 19th

century, the circus began to take on distinctly American characteristics. The first break came in the early 1800s. To satisfy the demands of a predominantly rural country, showmen found it more profitable to keep their shows constantly on the move, rather than base themselves in one city. Early shows were performed outdoors with no formal admission charge. "Donations" were voluntarily given after each performance. But this method of financing wasn't always reliable, so in 1826 Nathan Howe and Aaron Turner set up their show under a canvas tent, charging admission at the entrance. The Big Top had made its first appearance.

No circus is complete without a parade, but this tradition didn't

arrive on the scene until 1837 in Albany, N.Y. Publicity again. This time to let the good people of Albany know that the circus was in town. The idea caught on instantly with other shows, and it wasn't long before gaily painted wagons with their festive music and fully-costumed performers marching down Main Street became an American institution. In rural areas, the circus parade was an event people looked forward to all year. In 1855, the steam-powered calliope was invented and soon its tooting wheeze far off in the distance meant only one thing.

By the 1860's, even more variety was added to the shows. Wild animals captured by sailors on their travels had been exhibited in

the U.S. since the early 1830's in small menageries, and in order to satisfy local preachers who routinely denounced circuses as immoral, showmen added these traveling zoos to give their shows an "educational" quality. Shortly after, historical pageants, usually depicting scenes from Biblical or Roman times were also added to give the shows further redeeming social value.

By 1871, the Big Top was gaining much of the grandeur it had once enjoyed in Rome. It was in that year that two of the all-time circus greats, P.T. Barnum and the Sells Brothers, started putting together their respective super-shows. Barnum was already well-known by that time. His experience in procuring both animal and human curiosities for his American Museum in New York transformed the side show into a major attraction, a far cry from George Washington's horse. Barnum teamed up with William Cameron Coup, a side show manager, and Dan Castello, a clown, to form the world's largest outdoor circus, combining side show, menagerie, hippodrome (a simulated Roman-style chariot race introduced here in 1852), and other acts essential to circuses by that time. Opening on

April 10, 1871, under 3½ acres of canvas in Brooklyn, N.Y., it traveled throughout the country that same year, playing to packed houses at every stop. Barnum's Great Roman Hippodrome, as it was billed, was responsible for even more American-style innovations. There was the first show to travel by railroad. Trains were faster, and the time previously spent traveling by horse and wagon was used for performing and better profits. They later added a second, and soon, a third ring to the Big Top, allowing for a larger variety of acts to take place at the same time. Barnum and his Hippodrome soon became No. 1 in the circus business.

But not for long. By 1880, Barnum's show was facing some pretty stiff competition. Foremost among his rivals was International Allied Shows, managed by James A. Bailey. Bailey had worked at numerous circus jobs for most of his life, working his way up until he became one of the most efficient business managers in the history of the circus. When one of the elephants in Bailey's show gave birth on March 10, 1880, he made the most of it, exhibiting the young pachyderm as the first elephant ever to be born in captivity on





*Above: Setting up the Big Top was a familiar sight in small towns all over America. Right and top right: Two staples of the circus, lion tamer and bareback rider, do their respective acts.*

American soil. Barnum immediately wired International Allied, offering \$100,000 for the elephant. Bailey refused to sell the animal at any price. Undaunted, Barnum decided to meet Bailey in person. It was following that meeting that Barnum and Bailey agreed to merge their shows into one spectacular super-show, with both as equal partners. With Barnum's knack for publicity and Bailey's genius as a manager, the combination was unbeatable. What they wanted, they got. This was dramatically illustrated in 1885 when they decided to buy the star attraction of the London Zoo, a huge gentle tusker named Jumbo. This caused such a public outcry in England that it sparked a Parliamentary debate and aroused the ire of Queen Victoria. The circus won, however, and Jumbo became an American for the sum of \$30,000, a costly investment in those days. But the investment paid off—on his first U.S. tour, Jumbo grossed \$300,000 in admissions receipts.

Circuses seem to keep their business a family affair, and the first family to make it big on the circus scene were the Sells Brothers. Born and raised in Ohio, the four



Sells brothers bought a set of animal cages and other cast-off circus property at an auction in 1871. By the spring of the following year, "Paul Silverburg Mammoth Quadruple Alliance Museum, Caravan, and Circus—A & L Sells, Proprietors" was touring the western half of the country. Their show grew and grew, buying up smaller outfits as it went along, until by 1878 it was entitled Sells Brothers' Great European Seven Elephant Railroad Show. The number of elephants was emphasized because Barnum, at the time, only had six to his credit. More expansion followed until by 1885



they had two shows traveling the country. Their first show, the larger of the two, had at its peak 457 employees, 253 horses, 45 cars, 71 animals and 4 tents. The two shows combined as one two years later.

The Sells knew their Western market, having been raised as Ohio farmers. They planned their tours according to when the various crops were in season, knowing full well that the worst time to bring a circus to a farming community was during planting time. Their success began to wane, however, in 1891 when, on an Australian tour, most of their horses caught a local disease called glanders and rapidly died. By 1905, all but one of the brothers had died. Lewis, the last one, sold the show to Bailey who, in turn, transferred half of the interest to Al Ringling of Ringling Brothers fame. When Bailey died a year later (Barnum died in 1891) and the Ringling brothers bought Barnum & Bailey's show, the Ringlings ran it until its last performance in 1911.

If Barnum & Bailey and the Sells brothers were Nos. 1 and 2 in the 19th century, the Ringling brothers have the top honors for the 20th century. The Ringling brothers—all five of them—grew up in

*(Continued to page 74)*

# A 5¢ HISTORY OF TV

By Robert Stewart



**O**wn a bubble gum card collection? Maybe you saved every important baseball card from 1892 to 1899. If you're a TV nostalgic, however, your collection would probably look more like the one seen on these pages. Television history, like baseball through the years, has been documented on this eccentric form of paper ephemera. How did it all happen?

*Soupy came in black and white (Q).*

The first bubble gum was blown around the turn of the century. This was "Blibber Blubber," a gooey mess that stuck to one's face and refused to let go. "Blibber Blubber" was immediately tossed back into the vat from whence it was spawned. Some observers thought the bubble had burst, but, in 1928, an accountant named

Walter Diemer concocted a more resilient confection. By 1933 everyone was blowing bubbles, and trading cards depicting everything from the League of Nations to "famous public enemies" were packaged with the gum. Both bubbles and gum vanished in 1942, but after the war, a true Bubble Gum Madness seemed to possess the country. The high point, undoubtedly, was a victory parade in



Robert Vaughn was one-half of U.N.C.L.E. (N); Mod Squad was a 68 show (V); Green Hornet came in 67 (T).

which thousands of Bazooka Bubble Gum wrappers fluttered through the canyons of Wall Street to inundate the returning heroes.

Enter television, spluttering and flickering at twilight in thousands of hardware stores and living rooms across the country: Actor William Boyd, otherwise known as Hopalong Cassidy, noticed the maverick medium and decided to head it off at the pass. After signing 1500 contracts, mortgaging his car and selling his ranch, Hoppy acquired TV rights to 54 of his films made between 1935 and 1943. Leaving Hasbeen Culch at

full gallop, Boyd rode the Comeback Trail to become the first great merchandising mogul of television. He was soon being billed as "the outstanding personality in the world," and, by mid-1950, over 75 manufacturers were licensed to use the name Hopalong Cassidy on products. There was Hoppy Soap and Hopalong Chocolate Coconut Candy. There were Hopalong Cassidy Cookies and Hoppy Sox and Hopalong Cassidy Waste-baskets.

And Hopalong Cassidy Picture Card Gum.

According to *Life*, Boyd didn't

approve of it. According to *Time*, "he has refused to license bubble gum". But here it is—tiny black-and-white cards (A) issued in 1950 by these Bazooka barons of Brooklyn, Topps Chewing Gum.

On October 10, 1952, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* leaped from radio to ABC Television. Back in the radio series of the Forties, before David and Ricky were old enough, they were portrayed by actors (Tommy Bernard, Henry Blair and Joel Davis). Having dispelled their doppelgangers, the two brothers looked like this in a 1953 Topps



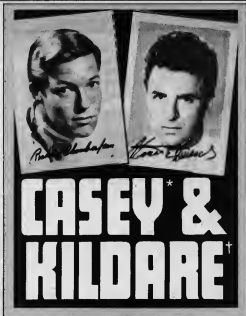
The Beatles (L), Elvis (E) and Fabian (C) each captured a wide rock audience in the 60s.



The Robinsons traveled in 1966.

card series called "Who-Z-At Star?" (B). In the case of Robert Stack, "Who-Z-At Star?" was a good question. He had appeared in films for 20 years before his widespread popularity as TV's Eliot Ness. Cara Williams, as noted on the back of her "Who-Z-At Star?" card, was quite visible on early television, long before Pete and Gladys (1960) and *The Cara Williams Show* (1964).

When Davy Crockett hired a ghostwriter in 1834 to dream up a fanciful autobiography that would increase his political popularity, it's doubtful that he could have fore-



Casey & Kildare were the tops in the medical field in 1961. (H)



"Just folks" shows are always popular; types are Gilligan (O), Beverly Hillsbillies (I) and the Nelsons (B).





*Gunsmoke is still around today after almost twenty years.*

seen his 1955 fame when he was "rediscovered" by Walt Disney and TV became a vast Frontierland. A multitude of youngsters wore a coonskin tail in back and a bubble in front, and in their pockets they carried cards—like the one with Fess Parker and also Buddy Ebsen. Crockettmania overshadowed the first American showings of the British-filmed *Adventures of Robin Hood* (Richard Greene) that same year.

Elvis made his television debut January 28, 1956, on the Dorsey Brothers' *Stage Show*, appearing for six consecutive Saturday nights. These gum cards (E) give an idea of the sensation he created in July when he introduced "Hound Dog" on *The Steve Allen Show* and, later in September, when Ed Sullivan's *Toast of the Town* blocked off the lower half of the screen, covering "Elvis the Pelvis" from the waist down.

A new genre labeled "the adult western" began in the mid-Fifties. By 1959 there were 32 different western shows on television. John Wayne appeared to introduce the debut episode of *Gunsmoke* (1955). Richard Boone was wearing a white surgical gown each week on *Medic*, but he quickly discarded it for his black *Hane Gun, Will Travel* (1957) outfit. That same year, both *Wagon Train* and *Wells Fargo* trekked westward. Steve McQueen hunted bounty with a sawed-off carbine on *Wanted: Dead or Alive*

in 1958, and *Yancy Derringer* (Jack Mahoney) strolled New Orleans with a gun in his hat. Meanwhile, back at the bubble gum factory, Topps rounded them all up for "TV Westerns," a 1958 set of cards.

Fabian's *Bus Stop* performance as a violent psycho killer during the 61-62 season brought on a Congressional investigation, and the episode ("Told By An Idiot") has never been seen on television since. No one, however, thought of suppressing "Fabulous Fabian Bubble Gum" (G), premised on the singer's successful late Fifties Amer-

ican Bandstand appearances. Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare both made incisions in the 1961 ratings, resulting in these "autographed" cards. (H) *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962) inspired these humorous captions (I), roughly on a par with the cornpone capriccio of the show. "Superman in the Jungle" was a 1963 Topps notion after seeing the super-ratings of the syndicated *Superman*, first televised in 1950.

The 1964 Johnson/Goldwater campaign was eclipsed, some thought, by the arrival of the Beatles (L). "Monsters from Outer Limits Bubble Gum" showed David McCallum in monster make-up for an episode titled "The Sixth Finger," but the fan mail didn't pour in until he removed the mask for *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* (1965) (N). Bob Denver, that same year, was stranded on *Gilligan's Island* (O) while Guy Williams, June Lockhart and Mark Goddard were *Lost in Space*. Soupy Sales (Q) got pies in the face, and Don Adams got spies in the face. Sorry about that, Chief.

"Color TV is a new technology. When confronted with a new technology, the instinct is to revive an old one," like the comic book on color TV," proclaimed media oracle Marshall McLuhan, referring to 1966's *Batman*. But what would McLuhan say about the Batcards? Close on Adam West's *Batman's* came *The Green Hornet* (T) and *The Rat Patrol*. 1968 was



*Other adult westerns from the 50s included Derringer & Wagon Train.*



A "new" type of hero came in 1957 with a hired gun who was named Paladin. Meanwhile, back at the bubble gum factory, he became a TV card.

the year of *Mod Squad* (V), *Land of the Giants* and the *Planet of the Apes* motion picture, which is now a television series.

To match the fast-paced *Laugh-In* zanyness, Topps came up with an assortment of items—like this caricature of Jo Anne Worley with a finger-sized hole in her mouth and stickers called "Goldie's Laugh On's."

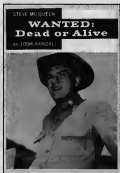
The real cards are the humorists of Topps' New Products Department, a diverse crew of giggle-mongers that includes: underground comic book artists Art Spiegelman, Jay Lynch, and Bill Griffith; Len Brown, author of "Encyclopedia of Rock 'N Roll"; Nostalgia Press publisher Woody Gelman and screenwriter Stan Hart, (*Moose*) two-time Emmy winner for his *Carol Burnett Show* sketches. Topps still mines a satiric vein in the Seventies, but TV properties licensed by the company, like *The Partridge Family* and also *The Waltons* that continue to serve as a barometer of current TV trends as well as what's popular in the public's mind.

Chew on that for a while, Mr. Nielsen.

## "SILENT CONFLICT"



One of television's first cowboy heroes was Hopalong Cassidy. Originally filmed as a routine, low-budget western, they became a national sensation.



Richard Boone, Dale Robertson & Steve McQueen were different heroes.

# Betty Bonnet's Rainy Day Party

By Sheila Young



# BETTY BONNET'S 1918 PAPER PARADE

In 1918, America was deep into a major war. One of the most popular refrains of the time was Irving Berlin's "Oh! How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning," and the art of the day was recruiting posters by Howard Chandler Christy, a prolific producer of such wartime art. The fighting would end by November, 1918, but while the doughboys were "Over There" the fashions over here were heavily influenced by the military effort. The uniform-look, even in small children's clothing was very evident, as can be seen on the opposite page. But women's fashions, in general, reflected the post decade rather than the anticipation of the next when the flapper in all her flamboyant glory would shock the nation. There was still an indication in 1918 that the nation was not yet fully emerged from the small-town atmosphere of peace and tranquility of pre-war times. The ruffles and flowers and yards of cloth in the fashion designs required time and patience to care for, and the little girl hugging the rabbits lends a provincial air, a feeling that all is well in the world as long as there is love. The war and the new progress in science and technology (as can be seen in the depiction of the phonograph under the boy's arm and the "new" camera on the next page) changed all that. The next decade, The Roaring Twenties, was one of a shifting population—from the farm



to the city—and one of even more shifting morals. But the paper doll people printed here were caught in a more tranquil (for them) time. They, and others like them, were found in many of the popular magazines of the day. A note at the bottom of the page suggested that the whole page be mounted on muslin or linen before the figures were cut out. "The different parts will last longer and the tabs will not tear so easily . . . by pasting an inch-wide strip of cardboard at the waistline, slightly bent to form an easel, the doll can be made to stand." Paper dolls have been a









*Warner Brothers' Gold Diggers of 1933, staged and directed by Busby Berkeley.*

## A MUSICAL HISTORY OF THE MOVIES

By Russ Jones

**I**f George Jessel had not broken his contract with Jack Warner, we might still be watching silent movies and the joyful sound of music from the lips of Julie Andrews might never have reached our ears. It happened like this:

Warner Brothers had purchased

the rights to *The Jazz Singer* in 1925. Jessel was the show's star on Broadway and had agreed to perform in the film version for the sum of \$30,000. However, Jessel changed his mind and wanted more money. The contract dispute caused Warner to contact Eddie

Cantor, who suggested that the role be given to Al Jolson. Jolson, in turn, accepted the part, but for an even larger fee than Jessel had wanted. Jolson got \$75,000.

Originally slated to be a silent film with a synchronized music score, it was later changed to con-

From Jolson to Berkeley to Kelly, the movie musical brought good escapism-entertainment to millions.



Above: The musical 50s-style: MGM's *It's Always Fair Weather* with Gene Kelly and Dan Dailey. Right: The musical 30s-style: Paramount Pictures' *Paramount On Parade*.

tain four musical interludes. And even more important, the film boasted a dialogue sequence between Jolson and his screen mother. The *Jazz Singer* gave movies a voice.

The following two years were hectic for the producers, as sound equipment was expensive and not yet proven. But, by 1930, silent films were a relic of the past. The "talkie" producers had won the gamble.

The beginning of the sound era still had several major problems. Many movie houses were not equipped to show sound films. For the first few years the studios produced both sound and silent versions of the same films. By the early '30s all theatres were converted.

Fox and Warners were the first companies to experiment with the sound process. Fox had Movietone, which was sound-on-film. Warner's had the sound-on-disc, Vitaphone.

But the sound process had several casualties. Many of the

studios' major stars could not make the transition from silent to sound. Foreign actors were the first to go. Among them were Emil Jannings, Pola Negri and Vilma Banky who spoke very little English. Others, like John Gilbert, Buster Keaton and Clara Bow, had voices that did not record well, or differed from what their screen image had been.

New faces took over. Hollywood turned to Broadway during this time of transition, and along with the talent, they brought the movie musical. It was good escapism fare with the Depression at everyone's door, and Hollywood produced many musical "escape" films. MCM made *Broadway Melody*, there was *Paramount On Parade* and countless others.

*Whoopie*, produced in 1930 by Samuel Goldwyn and Florenz Ziegfeld, created a new dimension. The film was shot in two-color technicolor, a far cry from the tinted films made in the 20s. This gave the picture a big boost at the box office.

*Whoopie* had another thing

going for it—Busby Berkeley. Berkeley had worked in Broadway for many years directing dance routines. Goldwyn was familiar with his work and called on him to direct the dance sequences. The combination of cast, Eddie Cantor, Eleanor Hunt and Paul Gregory, slick direction by Thornton Freeland, and music by Gus Kahn and Walter Donaldson were highlighted by Berkeley's dance numbers.

*Whoopie* was based on *The Nervous Wreck*, by Owen Davis. The title gives a clue to the film's content. Cantor plays a hypochondriac who soothes his body with pills and potions, and airs his injured and worried soul with

periodic outbursts of song. The setting is an elaborate dude ranch in Arizona complete with cowboys, Indians, and a bevy of the gorgeous "Goldwyn Girls." The setting created a vivid background for the color cameras.

The song, "Makin' Whoopee," became one of Cantor's biggest hits.

*Palm Springs* (1931) was a lesser effort from Samuel Goldwyn, but with some good Berkeley sequences, and fast-paced routines by Eddie Cantor. Cantor's big comedy scene is when he is being chased by a group of gangsters led by George Raft. Finding himself in the ladies' locker room disguised as a girl, he is forced first to strip for a

shower, and then go in the pool with the girls. Directed by Edward Sutherland, with Eddie Cantor, Charlotte Greenwood, Spencer Charters, George Raft. Music by Eddie Cantor, Benny Davis, Harry Akst, Ballard MacDonald and Con Conrad.

*Flying High* (1931) opened in the spring of 1930 on Broadway. It was produced by master showman George White. MCM quickly acquired the film rights. Although made in 1931, it was not released until December 1937. By this time, the Hollywood musical was no longer packing them in the audience had virtually disappeared. Notable is the performance of Bert Lahr, in his screen debut.

With Charlotte Greenwood, Pat O'Brien, Kathryn Crawford, Hedda Hopper, Cuy Kibbee. Directed by Charles Riesner. Based on the play by Buddy DeSylva, Lew Brown and Ray Henderson.

The *Big Broadcast* (1932) was Paramount's first of the "Big Broadcast" series, and the best. The plot deals with the then-high-riding radio industry. Bing Crosby, playing himself, displayed the naturalness that made him one of the biggest stars in the genre. Bing croons "Please" so many times throughout the film that it is a small wonder that it became one of his greatest hits. With Stuart Erwin, Burns & Allen, The Boswell Sisters, The Mills Brothers.



In 1933, Warners, spurred by their great breakthrough in talking pictures, had over-invested their monies in musical films and a string of pictures in color. Public enthusiasm for both had tapered off drastically. Darryl F. Zanuck, then in charge of production at Warner's, persuaded the studio to produce a musical, *42nd Street*, that would have a strong story and a superior cast, together with a fresh score and well mounted production numbers. The budget was set at \$400,000.

Mervyn LeRoy was slated to direct the film, but just before production was to begin he became ill. The project was then handed over to Lloyd Bacon. LeRoy had convinced Zanuck that the man to direct the production numbers was Busby Berkeley.

42nd Street began the legendary

within a year, she was chosen to be Fred Astaire's dance partner in *Flying Down to Rio*. Character actors like Cuy Kibbee, Ned Sparks and Allen Jenkins were also in the film and were actors who became virtually a stock company for the Warner's musicals.

42nd Street is the backstage musical of all backstage musicals. A harried producer of musical comedy, Julian Marsh (Warner Baxter) is trying to make his show a hit but he is saddled with the difficulties of a prima donna star who is having an affair with the show's backer. Just a few days before the big opening night on Broadway, she gets drunk and sprains her leg. With the success of the show now in peril, one of the girls in the chorus suggests that there is "a real little trooper" in the cast who could step in and play the lead. Ruby

you keep your feet on the ground and your head on those shoulders of yours, and, Sawyer, you're going out a youngster but you've got to come back a star!

The music was by Al Dubin and Harry Warren. This team would continue working on Warner's musical pictures for years to come. Produced by Darryl F. Zanuck, directed by Lloyd Bacon, with Warner Baxter, Bebe Daniels, George Brent, Una Merkel, Ruby Keeler, Cuy Kibbee, Ned Sparks, Dick Powell, Ginger Rogers, Allen Jenkins, Henry B. Walthall.

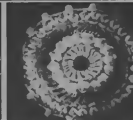
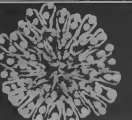
Gold Diggers Of 1933 sported some of Busby Berkeley's best dance numbers. "We're in the Money," sang by Ginger Rogers (partly in pig latin), filled the Depression-ridden audience with hope. "Shadow Waltz" crooned by

The "waterfall" number from *Footlight Parade* was one of Berkeley's most famous. The sequence cost over a hundred thousand dollars to produce.

being stolen by a spy in his company. As a last resort he kicks all the performers in the theater, where they continue to rehearse. Frank McHugh, playing the dance director, keeps wailing, "It can't be done!"

Of course, all comes off as planned.

*Footlight Parade* had three main musical numbers. "Honey Moon Hotel," with Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler, and the famous "By a Waterfall," again with Powell and Keeler. The "waterfall" number is perhaps one of Berkeley's more famous numbers, if not one of his



Overhead camera shots and original lighting transformed a seemingly ordinary water ballet sequence from *Footlight Parade*

into abstract geometric patterns.

screen career of the team of Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler. Powell had been signed with Warner's the year before and had appeared in several minor roles. 42nd Street established Powell as a musical star.

For Ruby Keeler, the film was her screen debut and she became the principal discovery that is credited to the film. She went on to make nine more musicals for Warner's, seven of them with Dick Powell. In 1939 she retired from films.

Another member of the cast who was to make the big time was Ginger Rogers, who was to make thirteen films in less than two years. Mervyn LeRoy had been dating her and convinced her to take a small role in *42nd Street*. She had a much larger part in *LeRoy's Gold Diggers of 1933*, and

Kewler, as Peggy Sawyer, does just that. Marsh drills her almost to the point of collapse in order to get a performance out of her. One of the screen's classic "pep talks" was Warner Baxter talking to Ruby Keeler just before the curtain went up!

MARSH: Sawyer, you listen to me and you listen hard. Two hundred people, two hundred jobs, two hundred thousand dollars, five weeks of grief and blood and sweat depend on you. It's the lives of all these people who've worked with you. You've got to go on and you've got to give, and give and give! They've got to like you, got to! You understand? You can't fall down, you can't! Because, your future's in it, my future, and everything all of us have is staked on you. All right now I'm through. But

Dick Powell became a standard. Perhaps the most important number was "Remember My Forgotten Man" sung by Joan Blondell. It was a searing comment on what had become of the WWI heroes, now on the nation's breadline. It was the first anti-war number ever in a film.

*Footlight Parade* followed *Gold Diggers Of 1933* a few months later. This film in some respects is probably one of Warner's most famous musicals of the 30's, at least from an audience's point of view. Some of the most lavish effects were employed in the musical numbers.

The plot of *Footlight Parade* is not dissimilar from that of *42nd Street* since both are backstage stories. James Cagney playing Chester Kent, musical prodigee producer, finds all his ideas are

most ambitious. The sequence cost over a hundred thousand dollars a lot of money, particularly during the Depression.

Three swimming pools were built on the soundstage, as well as a gigantic carousel-type affair, with numerous Berkeley girls turning in geometric patterns. The famous overhead shots were employed to their full advantage in this number.

Cagney got into the act in the "Shanghai Lil" sequence. It was his first song - and a dance routine since he entered the film industry. Notable in this number is young John Carfield, as an extra, peering

The "By A Waterfall" number from *Footlight Parade* (1933) is one of Berkeley's most memorable productions. The visual effects were achieved with three swimming pools, a revolving fountain and beehives of Berkeley beauties.





Gene Kelly dances his way through Singin' In The Rain, the last of the great musicals.

over a bear barrel. Six years later Garfield starred in "They Made Me A Criminal," which was directed by Berkeley.

With the formula established, Warner's continued to produce musical films. *Dames* (1934) might well have been titled, *Cold Diggers Of 1934*. It boasted the regular team, Dick Powell and Ruby Keeler, along with Warner's stock company of character actors, including Guy Kibbee and Hugh Herbert. "I Only Have Eyes For You" was the main tune in the film.

Roman Scandals was Goldwyn's most eye-appealing film with Eddie Cantor, and the seasiest of the movie musicals.

Berkeley auditioned legions of girls to select the hundred or so the picture required, and recalls that he and Goldwyn agreed on their choices, with the exception of two girls Goldwyn didn't like. Berkeley, however, insisted on hiring them. Barbara Pepper later became a popular character actress and the other was Lucille Ball.

Warner's next big musical effort was *Wonder Bar*. Some reviewers of the time thought the film topped its predecessors in entertainment value. It presents a strong cast plus a half a dozen musical numbers mixed with comedy, romance, drama, suspense, and even a taste of tragedy. The plot structure is reminiscent of *Grand Hotel*. Despite the large doses of music, Director Lloyd Bacon managed to blend the various episodes and maintain coherence.

Musically, *Wonder Bar* is a grand slam, with the singing of Al Jolson and Dick Powell, and the Latin dancing of Dolores Del Rio and Ricardo Cortez.

"Don't Say Goodnight" remains a stunning visual experience. First sung by Dick Powell, then danced by Del Rio and Cortez, the number continues into fantasy.

"I had them build me sixty tall white movable columns, to move against a black background. The columns were on separate tracks, independent of each other and all controlled electrically. I had a hundred dancers dance with the columns. Then they all disappeared and in their place was a huge forest of silver trees with a white reindeer running around. To get the effect I wanted, I built an

octagon of mirrors—each twenty-eight feet high and twelve feet wide—and inside this octad a revolving platform twenty-four feet in diameter. When I was drawing up the plans for this, everyone at the studio thought I had lost my mind. Even Sol Polito, one of the best cameramen I ever worked with couldn't figure out how I was going to photograph a production from the inside without the camera being seen. Actually, when I figured it out in my office using eight little compacts—the kind girls carry in their handbags—I discovered there was a way of moving at the center of the mirrors without being reflected.

Berkeley's octagon of mirrors is another example of his wild, yet practical imagination. With reflections stretching into infinity, he makes his hundred dancers seem like thousands. Yet another example of the genius of Busby Berkeley.

Warner's continued pouring out

By the end of the 30s, it looked as if the musical movie was beached for good. But World War II gave it a new cause to sing about—the boys overseas.



Above: Paramount's *The Big Broadcast Of 1937* used the radio industry as a theme. Below: MGM's *Showboat*, with lyrics by Jerome Kern, was a hit in the early 50s.



more and more musicals. *Fashions Of 1934*, with William Powell and Bette Davis had a luke-warm reception. It was bound to date quickly, yet it was more interesting now than it was when released for that reason alone.

The *Gold Diggers Of 1935* was perhaps the last great musical of the 30s. The plot is a bit shaggy, but the lavish production numbers more than make up the balance. "The Lullaby Of Broadway," sung by Wind Shaw, remains Berkeley's favorite number. His cut-it-in-the-camera style was never better used. The "Lullaby" sequence was nominated for an Academy Award. Another notable example of the Berkeley touch is in the "Words Are In My Heart" number. Fifty-six white pianos and fifty-six beautiful girls whirl in a military drill in waltz time, an effect achieved by stagehands dressed all in black, carrying lightweight piano shells on their backs.

The main Warner's musicals for 1935 were *Bright Lights* with Joe E. Brown and Ann Dvorak; *In Caliente*, with Dolores Del Rio, Pat O'Brien and Leo Carrillo; *I Live For Love*, with Dolores Del Rio, Everett Marshall and Guy Kibbee; *Stars Over Broadway*, with Pat O'Brien, James Melton and Frank McHugh.

1936 offered *Stage Struck*. The film got a badly needed boost at the box office when Dick Powell and Joan Blondell got married just before its release. Another backstage musical, this one tried to poke fun at "the show must go on" tradition. Like *42nd Street*, it recounts the familiar story of the unknown kid who makes good as the last minute fill-in for the star. With Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, Warren William, Frank McHugh.

*Gold Diggers Of 1937* was the next to the last of the series. Once again the production numbers were rich, but it is apparent that the Hollywood musical was searching for another direction, one that would arrive during the Second World War.

(Continued to page 73)



Blondie, the most successful comic strip in the world, was married on February 17, 1933. © King Features Syndicate. Reprinted by permission. Winnie Winkle first appeared in 1920. © Chicago Tribune-Daily News Syndicate.

## WIMMIN! IN COMICS? YE GADS!

By Bob Abel

Women had been depicted; for comic purposes, as harsh, unpleasant persons—the natural enemy of men. Winnie Winkle changed all that.



In the beginning there was Wonder Woman. She liberated comic books from the tyranny and dominance of male superheroes. If you don't believe me, let me quote Gloria Steinem to you.

Are you merely quoting her or are you disputing her?

First I will quote her. Then I may dispute her a little bit. You're a brave man.

Thank you. Anyhow, Ms. Steinem, in her introduction to a hard cover collection of *Wonder Woman* stories says: "She was beautiful, brave, and explicitly out to change 'a world torn by the

hatreds and wars of men." Wonder Woman's final message to her sisters almost always contained one simple and unmistakable moral: self-reliance. Be strong. Earn your own living. Don't depend on a man or any force outside yourself. Not even a friendly Amazon. In *Wonder Woman's* own words, "You saved yourselves—I only showed you that you could!"

Nice quote. Gloria sure tells it like it was.

Yes, but now let's take issue with Ms. Steinem. True, *Wonder Woman*, appearing in comic books in the early 1940s, was the first

superheroine, but there were comic strip heroines doing their non-sexist thing over two decades before *Wonder Woman* (alias Diana Prince, Army nurse) dropped her skirts (in favor of shorts, because creator William Marston found skirts were too difficult to draw in action pictures) and set out to provide, as Marston intended, an alternative to the "bloodcurdling masculinity" of most comic books.

Two decades, huh?

Yep, *Winnie Winkle* first appeared on the nation's comics pages in 1920. She was self-reliant. And

strong. And earned her own living. And did she provide an "alternative to the bloodcurdling masculinity" of most comic strips?

Nope, she provided an alternative to the bloodcurdling shrewishness of comic strip heroines of the day. Like Maggie, Jiggs' wife, in *Bringing Up Father*, and Mutt's wife in *Mutt and Jeff*.

How about *Mama*, who often harassed *Dr. Captain* in *The Katzenjammer Kids*?

Sure. I don't know if I'd consider *Mama* a shrew, but the point is that women were depicted, for comic purposes, as harsh, unpleasant

persons—the natural enemy of men, if you will. At least husbands. Poor Jiggs, always having to sneak off to have some corned beef 'n cabbage with the boys instead of going to the opera. As Stephen Becker, in his fine book, *Comic Art in America*, says, "Jiggs escapes the world of manners for the world that matters."

But *Winnie* was a nice gal, huh? The first one to appear in comic strips?

No, *Winnie* was the first real career gal in the comics. But back in 1912 there was a real doll, drawn by Cliff Sterrett, named

Polly. She wore short skirts and had long legs—a combination which bothered not only her Paw, but a lot of folks out there in *Real Life*.

How so? Did *Polly* sleep around a lot?

No. *Polly* was only as promiscuous as the times would allow—she dated a lot, but no real hanky-panky—but Sterrett loved to kid the fads and fashions of the day, which, naturally enough, included women's fashions. And whatever the length of women's skirts, Sterrett somehow managed to give offense. "I still encountered many





In 1933, The Gumps featured woman characters such as Millie and Mame De Stross. © Chicago Tribune-Daily News Syndicate.

—down for the outrageous way she treats Mac. If he weren't such a good-natured chap he would have given her up a long time ago."

*Do you think Tillie was just a 'tease'?*

Let's face it, Tillie could have succumbed to Mac's long-range blandishments at any point in the decades-long romance, but Mac's courting of Tillie was the central plot device of the strip. If Tillie said "Yes" to Mac, would her career as wife-and-possibly-mother be as interesting to readers as the role of Available Female? In fact, when Mac proposed to Tillie for the 5,609th time in 1959, the strip ended.

*How realistic do comic strips ever get about sexual relationships?*

Not very, in the strips we're talking about. But don't you really think that Put Ryan and the Dragon Lady were getting together, after working hours, in Terry and the Pirates? And when Milton Caniff, truly one of the innovators in the field, dropped Terry in 1947, and started *Steve Canyon*, the message was sneakily clear: No one gets too forward on the comics page, but do you honestly think that

Steve, who's constantly involved with desirable adversaries like Herself Muldoon and Copper Calhoun (to choose a pair of especially affluent sex-objects), doesn't get something going off-stage, as it were? Certainly part of Caniff's

**Blondie brought the message to millions that women actually run the American family. And Tillie showed that young ladies could go to work in big cities without fearing damnation.**



King Features, Inc.

skill is in letting the reader think there *must* be more than meets the eye in Steve's confrontations with these great-looking chicks.

Granted. But you do admit that there were no sexually liberated females in the comic strip medium—or comics, either, for that matter—before *Wonder Woman*?

Wonder Woman was about as sexually liberated as Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm. True, she made Lois Lane seem like a vestal virgin, because Lois never got into a nice, warm, juicy clinch with either Superman or fellow worker Clark Kent. And at least Wonder Woman got to wrap her arms around Steve (an Army friend, to be sure), but when she did, she was prone to babble: "Oh! You're even stronger than I remembered—" She could head Steve into an imitation pretzel, if she wanted to, but here she is, playing coy.

No comment. *Wonder Woman* could do no wrong: she was just a product of her times.

Yes, and there were other "types," products of their times—Dixie Dugan; Jane Arden, an admittedly beautiful girl reporter; *Roots of Boots and Her Buddies*, and

*My heart belongs to Nancy*.

I hope Ms. Steinem never hears you talking like that.



Tillie was proposed to by Mac for the 5,609th time in 1959 and the strip ended. © King Features, Inc. Reprinted by permission.



# BANNED IN BOSTON

By Parker Hodges



Linda Lovelace, you're not going to believe this. When I was a kid, growing up very green in the 50s in North Carolina, I had a great many books and was proud of them, but I made sure that my mother did not find my copies of two novels: *Tap Roots* and *Forever Amber*. My blood sang as heroes fumbled knowledgeably with the bodices and bottoms of ravishing women; and while my years decreed that I could be aroused by virtually anything — word was out that these two volumes, both national bestsellers, were BANNED. Where, none of us really knew, because even in Bap-

Theda Bara, Claudette Colbert and Elizabeth Taylor in their roles as the Vamp of the Nile, Cleopatra.

tist North Carolina it was certainly easy enough to buy either book off almost any paperback rack, save the one that graced the local Christian Science Reading Room. But the illogic of their availability didn't matter. I had my own collection of officially designated erotica, my own two Banned Books

tucked away for late night reading. And even rumors of a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* locked away, deep in the bowels of the Public Library on Pack Square, didn't lessen my regard for my Two-inch Shelf of Porn. First of all, I reasoned, if anything could possibly be sexier than *Tap Roots* I would not survive the reading of it; given the folk wisdom of the time, such a book would drive me into such an orgy of self abuse as to cover me, irremediably, with zits and, at the same time, destroy my sight forever. Not to mention, of course, the fact that I would probably live out the rest of my days locked in a



Maureen O'Sullivan and Johnny Weissmuller in a scene from *Tarzan and His Mate* (1934).

padding cell at Dix Hill, the State Mental Institution, slobbering out mad greeting to my fellow onanists. No thank you, *Top Roots* and *Forever Amber* were plenty for a 14-year-old with a perfect attendance badge from Sunday School.

It was ill, of course, pretty silly. I've read both books as an adult and am astounded that it took so very little to host a blooming adolescent's sexual fantasies. But, even sillier from the vantage of the 70s, attempts had been made to ban both books: *Forever Amber* in Massachusetts in 1948; and *Top Roots* in Alabama. Both efforts failed. Later, various municipalities would take legal shots at the Grace Metalious bestseller, *Peyton Place*, with no more luck than the earlier bluenoses of Massachusetts or Alabama. Things were changing.

Time had been when, for example, Boston theater-goers who saw Shakespeare's *Henry V* on Sunday weren't allowed to hear an actor speak the line containing the

phrase "the Dance of the Veils" that had been one of the super hits at the Chicago Columbian Exhibition was made palatable to the bluenoses by a sort of picket fence affair stencilled over each frame; you knew her belly was flying around in the picture somewhere, but discovering exactly where was a job for an experienced and acrobatic peeping tom. And in 1934, when Hollywood suffered a storm of criticism for "loose morals," Cardinal Dougherty pronounced it a mortal sin for any Roman Catholic of his diocese to attend any movie. Your ticket stub might be a ticket straight to hell if you took the prelate at his word.

Theda Bara as Cleopatra.



phrase "bawdy house." Presumably, weekday fans of the bard could hear this line without fear of damnation or moral befoulment. Mae West was jailed during the 30s in New York when she produced and starred in a play she'd written called *See*; the play wasn't all that raunchy, according to contemporary accounts, but the title itself was enough to rile the forces of righteousness. But plays didn't upset censorious authorities nearly as much as movies. Almost anyone could afford a ticket to a film, and the powers that were took a very parental attitude towards a mass audience. (Lawyer Morris Ernst points out that there was very little sexual censorship of books before the spread of literacy; when only the rich and powerful were able to read, nobody seemed to mind a little hot stuff between the covers.) A 1906 film of Fatima repeating

There was very little censorship of books before the spread of literacy; when only the rich could read, nobody minded a little hot stuff between the covers.

Even though things were changing, they weren't changing all that fast. There were still plenty of people getting upset at what other people were getting off on. Here are some interesting ones, and, as I said earlier, Linda, you're not going to believe this.

#### NAVEL MANEUVERS

Got up like a Neiman-Marcus mannequin representing the stylish stout department, Elizabeth Taylor was out the first big Hollywood Cleopatra. That dubious honor went to Theda Bara Claudette Colbert was second when she banged down the Nile in 1934 for Cecil B. DeMille. And while Colbert's more lissome queen presided over a movie that was, in many respects, a better spectacle than either the earlier or later versions, it is most memorable for what it

did to the Hollywood vision of the female body, a vision that persisted almost 30 years. A supporting player attired in little more than sequin pasties and a gauze skirt upset the censors. It wasn't the bareness of her breasts that bothered folks. Except for the always forbidden nipple, the breast itself did not become off limits until later, and besides, given the fashionable body of the time, what was later to be measured in terms of melons, was, in the 20s and 30s, not much to speak of. No. It was the young lady's navel. Plugged with a fake gem, the navel vanished from Hollywood movies, and the ban on the belly button lasted 28 years. Not until 1962, in a Kirk Douglas movie called *Town Without Pity*, did the American female cinema body come equipped with evidence that it was a

part of nature and was born at all.

#### CLASSIC COMICS

Eisenhower's Postmaster General banned Aristophanes' Creek comedy *Lysistrata* from the mails. When someone pointed out to the gentleman that the play had been a classic of world literature for over 2,000 years, Arthur Summerfield retorted, explaining that he hadn't known the play was as old as it was.

#### DIRTY, DIRTY, DIRTY

In 1953, Otto Preminger made a film called *The Moon Is Blue* in which he dared to use such smutty words as "virgin," "seduce," and "pregnant." Not to mention the fact that William Holden, who played an architect, after deciding to go out and get laid, doesn't die or get brain damage or anything. As a matter of record, he doesn't even score, meeting up with virginal Maggie McNamara who insists that Holden marry her before she'll warm his bed.

This pteropan collared drama was banned in Kansas in 1955 as "obscene, indecent and immoral." So much for the corn belt. As for "sophisticated" New York, the film was labeled "an occasion of sin" by the Archbishop of New York in 1955 as the Archdiocese of Babylon on the Hudson.

#### ME TARZAN, YOU STUPID

In Los Angeles, home of sinful Hollywood, all of the Edgar Rice Burroughs *Tarzan* books were removed from the shelves of elementary public school libraries. The reason: *Tarzan* and Jane had never married. The year: 1961.

#### FRENCH UNDERDRESSING

Brigitte Bardot stormed these shores in 1957, flouting her sweet, sweet epidermis, her navel intact—foreigners are funny people—in the French film *And God Created Woman*. All over the country, bits and pieces of this Roger Vadim film were snipped out to protect the eyes and libidos of innocent Americans from this Gallic hussy. But the most absurd and indecent incident of censorship occurred in the great state of Texas. The film



Brigitte Bardot poses in a scene from the 1957 film, *And God Created Woman*.



Jane Russell wiggling her chest in a scene from the movie, *The French Line*. David Niles and William Powell relax in a scene from *The Moon Is Blue*.

wasn't for first-run theaters, none of which, it seemed, admitted a race then known as Negro. The film was not shown in second-run theaters, many of which were located in black and Mexican ghettos.

#### LEAVE IT TO JANE

A memo from Howard Hughes, producer and later director of the movie, read, "We're not getting enough production out of Jane's breasts." Hughes took over the direction of *The Outlaw* and got enough shots of Jane Russell's breasts to keep the movie off most movie screens for almost six years. For a while it was even rumored that Hughes, using his experience

in designing airplanes, had engineered a radical new bra to support Jane's massive orbs, but, alas, this story proved to be untrue. What was true was the fact that *The Outlaw*, a fictional biography of Billy the Kid, featured at least two scenes that sent the censors streaking for their scissors. In the first of them, Billy, enflamed by the contents of Jane's blouse, rapes her in a conveniently located barn. Jane, of course, is a bit upset by this intrusion, but goes on about her business. As does Billy, who is wounded while pursuing his career. Lo and behold, Jane turns up to help cure the varmint who done it to her in the hayloft. Her but? Some sexual therapy in a

narrow Western bed. Mind you, in neither scene was there obvious nudity. Nevertheless, the Hays Office wasn't exaggerating when it noted of the film that it contained an "inescapable suggestion of an illicit relationship."

It took three years for Hughes to get his film ready for a censor-approved opening in San Francisco. Hughes hired billboards all around the Bay area and expected land office business. What he got instead was fury. Jane's 35" bust, spread "wall-to-wall," as critics contended, across the San Francisco skyline was too much for the city fathers and mothers. The

What was once labeled "grossly obscene and indecent" is now shown on daytime television, as is a film once called "an occasion of sin."

grossly obscene, suggestive, and indecent action, costuming and dialogue."

By the way, *The French Line* is shown on television these days. Daytime television.

#### PASS THAT BOTTLE TO ME

Tonawase Williams and Ella Kazan had a few problems with their film of *Streetcar Named Desire*—Blanche's husband's homosexuality

also given to some pretty loving tongue work on her coke bottle (Linda, are you paying attention?) This, it seems, conjured up the unspeakable horror itself; perhaps Carroll Baker used her mouth for other than kissing and feeding purposes.

As soon as the film opened in New York, Cardinal Spellman denounced it from the pulpit. He went on, in those super-patriotic

decided it would publish the randy masterpiece in America. The Post Office almost immediately banned the book from the mails, and it took over a year for the authorities to admit that the story of the affair between Constance, Lady Chatterly and her crippled husband's gamekeeper, Mellors, was fit for American readers. *Field & Stream*, a magazine for sportsmen, viewed the publication a bit more lightly:



Kim Hunter, Vivian Leigh and Marlon Brando in the cooled-down movie version of *Streetcar Named Desire*. And Carroll Baker teaches her husband in *Baby Doll*.

had to be dropped; the rape is still there if you knew it was there before you saw the movie; Stella doesn't look quite as horny when she embraces Stanley as she did when the scenes were first shot—but nothing compared to the brouhaha that greeted their film of *Baby Doll*. Carroll Baker plays the teenage wife of Karl Malden, a cotton gin owner. Malden has agreed not to touch his wife until their marriage is a year old, but just before his deadline, Eli Wallach, playing a business rival, seduces her in order to get some dirt on Malden. Well, it seems that what really had folks upset was the fact that *Baby Doll* slept with her thumb in her mouth, and she was

days, to add, "It is the moral and patriotic duty of every local citizen to defend America from dangers which threaten our beloved country from beyond our boundaries, but also the dangers which confront us at home." The defense took the form of picket lines thrown up around the theaters that were screening the film. Box-office receipts soared, and for a while, Carroll Baker, unlikely as it now seems, became a star.

#### OUTDOOR LIFE

Copies of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* were still being smuggled into the states, tucked into belts, and hidden behind more innocent book jackets, when in 1959, Grove Press

"Although written many years ago, *Lady Chatterly's Lover* has just been reissued by Grove Press, and this fictional account of the day-by-day life of an English gamekeeper is still of interest to outdoor-minded readers, as it contains many passages on pheasant raising, the apprehending of poachers, ways to control vermin, and other chores and duties of the professional gamekeeper. Unfortunately, one is obliged to wade through many pages of extraneous material in order to discover and savor these sidelights on the management of a Midlands shooting estate, and in this reviewer's opinion this book cannot take the place of J.R. Miller's *Practical Gamekeeping*."

## FLYING CINDERELLAS

By Kit Snedaker

Some men can't resist a Cinderella, especially one that's not so young anymore and has developed a lot of character. Airmen are the worst. Show some flyers a middle-aged Aerona with battered wings and holes in her head and right away there is Walter Mitty coming on like the prince with the glass slipper. Planes are just plain romantic to some guys. They have a love affair with them. "She was an unbelievable sight with oil leaking out of the engine, crying down either side of the airplane. Oleanders were growing up through the bottom. The instrument sockets were hollow eyes with tubes coming out. Wires dangled everywhere and the leatherette upholstery was in shreds. But she had those great dramatic lines and she looked so sad it seemed my lot in life to try to save her."

Channing Clark jokes about his amphibious '36 Fleetwings Sea Bird now as a flying African Queen, but he does it with tender humor that comes from living with her for eleven years, and nursing her back to health for four.

"There she was in the back of a dirty garage, just a bare skeleton. The plane had no skin. Wood was rotten, steel rusty. Quite a story behind the plane, too," John Jefferies is still telling about the first time he saw his 1946 Aerona Chief, seven years ago.

"Four years ago in Washington I saw a Hurricane in the Smithsonian. Behind it there were pictures of the plane taking off. It just looked so pretty I thought—dam! It'd be nice to try and get some of those airplanes. After World War II nobody was interested in keeping them. I started doing it."

That's how David Tallchiet's harem of winged Cinderellas began. Old airplanes are long past being his hobby and are now part of his business. Bin'ness is the way he says it with Texas still on his tongue. His Specialty Restaurants use planes as a theme, developing places like the 94 Aero Squadron. There are three of these airplane restaurants in Southern California now and Tallchiet would like to build others in a good many places including England.

As flight mechanics or co-pilots rather than pilots, all three men romanced airplanes and flying early in life. Only with their Cinderella planes did they turn Walter Mitty-like into princes and were pilots at last.

Jefferies and Clark are still monogamous, flying the first old plane they found. Both belong to the

Angels Antiquers, a kind of free-form outfit bent on preserving aviation history as well as old planes. Few Antiquers go as far as Clark and Jefferies, though, and rebuild a whole plane. Only a mechanic would consider that. Jefferies and Clark were both mechanics first, then pilots. David Tallchiet was trained as a co-pilot during the war and didn't get into that left-hand command seat until he collected his own planes. It's as though all three men were magnetized until they finally had their own planes to fly. It took them a while too.

Channing Clark, a David Niven look-alike, used to hang around hangars in Ohio. He bounced west on a motorcycle, landing in Glendale. A course in aircraft mechanics gave him his flight engineer's license and he liked the school so

Channing Clark and his '36 Fleetwings Sea Bird.





*Top, in the foreground is seen Tallicet's Curtiss P40 Kittyhawk, and left is his P26 Marauder. Right is drawing from WWII still on plane.*

much that he went back there to teach after the war.

Clark flew over his Sea Bird as it sat in the dust next to the Costa Mesa highway, and found himself watching for it as a nostalgic landmark every time he flew that route. He flew it as often as possible.

It took him four years of looking before he bought it. Stainless steel is the wrong material for an airplane. The Sea Bird needed to be spot welded together, wings

covered with fabric and a new engine installed up top like a dizzy hat. Reconstruction would take more than a fairy godmother and magic wand. Moving the Sea Bird involved a trailer the size of a dance hall and even then half a wheel stuck out on either side. The Saturday drive from Costa Mesa to Glendale was marked by lots of stops for tea and Rollaids.

"When I was building that thing," Clark said, "before I had a

seat in the cabin, I used to turn a waste basket upside down and sit there like Walter Mitty when everyone else was gone, grasping the imaginary controls and lifting it out of there—out through the hangar over the tree tops, anticipating the first flight."

Alas, the first time for almost anything except books and movies, usually isn't up to expectations. Toward the end of one bright October day, Clark taxied the Sea Bird out to make her first flight. She lifted off just the way she was supposed to, just the way he had dreamed it in the hangar. She responded precisely, just the way she had when his left-hand command seat was an upturned basket.

Still, Clark admits the fun came later. Self-satisfaction best describes the way he felt about that first flight. Then later, he says, you smile all night.

As soon as the Sea Bird was operable, Clark couldn't contain himself. He left teaching to trace the history of his Cinderella. A trip to her birthplace in Bristol, Pa., yielded a chat with one of her builders and the information that she was one of only five ships, the first one or the prototype. Only two of the original five are still flying.

Fleetwing Sea Birds were built for wealthy sportsmen and adventurers. One flew up to the gold fields of Alaska in 1937 and crashed in the wilds of British Columbia, and, since the crash didn't hurt the plane much, the pilot had to shoot his way out with a .45 automatic. They may look funny, but these ships were built to last. Those great dramatic lines not only hold the plane together, but demand atten-

## Rescuing those old sweethearts gives frustrated airmen a chance to become pilots, and to hear them tell it, saves an endangered species as well.

tion in every airport. Publicity in a flying magazine prompted a Texan to write Clark saying that the machine had flown submarine patrols out of Beaumont over the Gulf during the war. It's a real duck. The landing wheels are pumped out of the way by hand for water landing, although Clark hates to bring her down on salt water. It's bad for her complexion.

No other plane has moved him to such devotion. Clark has no plans to dump his own girl. She cost

aggravate any swerve into a ground loop. But she is a lady at all times. There's not a mean streak in her. Just handle her firmly and gently."

Nicknames for these Cinderellas are a serious business. Knocker for instance, is a foreshortening of Aeronca, since an unmuffled engine stack sometimes produces a sharp report, like a knock, from the exhaust system.

Orange and white are Aeronca's colors, so she is an Orange Bird. In

'46 she was yellow and blue, but Jefferies wanted to be sure a two-seater single engine plane taxiing down a busy runway at 55mph would be seen by anyone revving up to a 90 mph takeoff behind him. An assistant art director for Screen Gems and set designer for the last nine years, Jefferies felt Hugger orange would show up better in California's smog and haze.

It took both his art and electro-mechanics to move that Orange Bird from a garaged ruin to the Santa Paula airport and into the air. Jefferies spent four years with Strategic Air Command as flight engineer and inspector, then switched to aerospace, swearing he was through with airplanes forever. Eighteen months later he was eating his lunch in the cabin of a Cessna at Van Nuys airport looking out the windows and dreaming of being up, up and away. He had neither a pilot's license nor a plane. He didn't get either until his ability to simulate computers drew him into science fiction films.

Art gave him enough money to turn a Cinderella plane into a dream with wings. Electromechanics gave him the know-how. His wife's tolerance and a garage with a driveway gave him the place. With an old service manual

(Continued to page 72)



\$20,000 new, in '36, and he figures she's worth \$130,000 now. He's really not ready to sell.

Cinderellas don't come cheap. John Jefferies has been offered \$5000 for his '46 Aeronca Chief. He put \$2300 into it, counting \$750 for the carcass. New, that Orange Bird or Knocker Chief, as it is sometimes called, cost \$2395.

Like most four cylinder, air-cooled engines, she has a sort of face on the front of her round engine. Jefferies' four children call it Happy Face. She is also called a tail dragger because of her tail wheel and rumored handling difficulty on landings. Jefferies denies it.

"You just have to keep her straight," he said. "Don't let her wander. The tail gear will

Above is David Tallichet and below is Jefferies' '46 Aeronca Chief.



# EUBIE BLAKE: RAGTIME'S LIVING LEGEND

By Linda Solomon

The ninety-one year young pianist, composer and arranger has been playing and writing ragtime most of his life—and he's still at it.

No, Marvin Hamlisch didn't invent that syncopated, good-timey music that underscored *The Sting*, won an Oscar, and blitzed America's radio stations and jukeboxes as the Number One hit instrumental, "The Entertainer." Ragtime is a lot older than the relatively young Mr. Hamlisch. The closest America has ever come to creating a native classical piano music, ragtime found its beginnings over half a century ago in the bordellos, sporting clubs and saloons and at the dances, parades, picnics and funerals in the American South and Midwest. Ragtime's unofficial headquarters was Sedalia, Missouri, where Scott Joplin (who did write "The Entertainer") composed the celebrated "Maple Leaf Rag," which was published there in 1899—the same year Eubie Blake wrote "Charleston Rag."

People act as if piano rags were a new invention—the latest novelty of the 70s. But Eubie Blake knows better. He was there when it started. The 91-year-young pianist, composer and arranger has been playing and writing ragtime music for most of his life—and he's still at it, with no intention of quitting.

He has become a legend in his own time, living proof of ragtime's playing (and paying!) power. For his gifts as a musician and composer, Eubie has received acclaim from his fellow musicians and even from staid academic institutions like Rutgers, Dartmouth, Brooklyn

College and the New England Conservatory of Music, which have awarded him honorary doctorates.

That's quite a score for a former high-school dropout, which Eubie became at 17 when he began performing professionally. However, after an alleged "retirement" in 1946, he returned to his studies, completing "The Schillinger System of Composition" at New York University under the tutelage of Professor Rudolph Schramm. Eubie was graduated from N.Y.U. in June, 1950—at the age of 66.

The man referred to in no less an august publication than *The Wall Street Journal* as "The Comeback Kid" has, in fact, never been far away from his Steinway grand piano. Although he had not been performing publicly since 1946,

executive-producer John Hammond of Columbia Records lured Eubie into a recording studio in 1969. The result was a stunning double-disc, *The Eighty-Six Years of Eubie Blake*—his first record in 50 years. Extensive album notes were written by Robert Kimball of Yale, co-author of *Reminiscing With Sissle and Blake* (Viking), which was published in 1973.

Because it seemed unlikely that a major label would again rush to record Eubie's impressive work and since he was not planning to cease his composing and performing, Eubie felt it necessary to form his own company. To assure that his recent and future efforts would continue to go on record, Eubie Blake Music was established by Eubie and his partner, producer Carl Seltzer. By this Christmas, eight albums will have been released featuring Eubie himself and his vaudeville and musical comedy friends of another era. (readers interested in additional product information may send for the EBM brochure: Eubie Blake Music, 284-A Stuyvesant Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11221.)

The Blakes' three-story brownstone in Brooklyn is a veritable treasure trove of show business memorabilia. Eubie and his second wife, Marion (she danced in *Dixie to Broadway* and *Keep Shuffling*, and was W.C. Handy's personal secretary for over 20 years), have been nestled there for some 30 years, and the house has a com-



Cover from Eubie's own label.



*A recent picture of the "living legend," now in his nineties.*

fortable lived-in feeling. Hand-made lace curtains frame the door to the basement-level living room where the Steinway is located, around which most of the activity (including record production) is centered.

"My name is Eubie Blake," the compact gentleman announced, "and I was born in 18-and-83. My father and mother were slaves. I started playing piano when I was six years old. I took music lessons from Miss Margaret Marshall, who lived next door. She started me to read music, and how I began to be a composer was through a white fella named Leslie Stuart. He wrote a show called *Flora Dora*. I couldn't write music until 1915. Llewellyn Wilson (former conductor of an all-Negro Symphony Orchestra sponsored by the city of Baltimore) taught me how to put the music down.

"People ask me about the begin-

nings of ragtime. I'm 91 now, and I can remember when I was three or four, and they were playing it then. I don't know when it started, because I heard it all my lifetime. Negroes played ragtime, and it wasn't considered Art. Oh, it was terrible, because it came from the houses of ill-repute and the back rooms of small-time bars where they had a pool table and a piano. That's where I heard it.

"We have a very fine concert pianist, Andre Watts. He's a Negro. But if you gave him 'Charleston Rag,' he couldn't play it. (I'm only speaking about my numbers now.) You take 'Troublesome Ivories.' It's got an irregular bass. Mozart and those white composers would say it's wrong

because it's not regular, and basses don't go like that. See, the masters couldn't play it, because to them, it's wrong. It isn't wrong, it's the way we play.

"Most white people say, 'All Negroes got rhythm. Don't you believe that! All Negroes don't have rhythm, and all Negroes can't sing. And all Italians can't sing either, see? They say all Italians got a beautiful voice. No, it's just another form of prejudice.

"My first job was with Dr. Frazier's Medicine Show. I was 17, and I got three dollars a week and room and board." (Eubie played melodon and buck-danced on the back of a truck.) "We played one town and we left, and we sculked from Fairfield, Pennsylvania, to Baltimore.

"And then I went in the houses of ill-repute. You're a lady, and I've got to be careful of the way I talk! It was a five-dollar house, and



"But ragtime is the 'go,'" he smiles, "and I'm sellin' what the people want."

that was a lot of money then. I never played in a colored house in my life. There was no money in the colored houses. First thing, they didn't have no pianos there.

"My mother was very religious, too much so. And she was a domestic. She would holler 'Take that ragtime out of my house! Don't let me ever hear you play that again! That's the devil's work.' Everything like that was 'the devil's work' with her. If it wasn't for the devil's work, I don't know what she would have done! Oh, I was the worst boy on the block, she said.

"I had ten brothers and sisters, but I never saw any of them. They died in infancy because my mother never had any prenatal care. None of them lived to be two years old.

"But I want to get back to playing in those houses. I got three dollars a week at Aggie Shelton's five-dollar house. Oh, it was a palace, like in the movies! She was a great big woman, Aggie Shelton,

like an Amazon. I think she was German, she talked with an accent. She was the madam. She didn't (put out) or nuthin' like that.

"I'll tell you how my mother found out about my working there. The sisters of the church would come by, and they'd hear me. I have never changed my style of playing. I play the same now as I did 70-75 years ago, and everybody knew my style. They'd say to my mother, 'I heard little Hubie—my name is James Hubert, and they called me Hubie—playin' up at Aggie Shelton's!'"

He left there about a month after his mother found him out, but went on to a dollar-house called Annie Gilley's. "That's where the girls peck on the windows—'Come on in, boys, you're gonna have a

nice time!' Naw, they didn't have no red lights, that's a myth. They'd have red in the parlors, but the back room, where the piano was, was the same as anywhere else," explained Eubie.

"I met Noble Sissle in 1915. He came from Indianapolis, and he was a singer and a lyricist. And I shook hands with him and we started to write. The first number we wrote was 'It's All Your Fault.' We wrote that for a white fella named Eddie Nelson. And Sophie Tucker—you ever heard of Sophie Tucker?—that's the first woman ever started us off as popular composers! She was playing the Maryland Theatre, and we took it to her, and she sang it. She took it around with her on the road, and it was a hit in the state of Maryland."

Sissle and Blake teamed with Miller & Lyles, out of which came the hit 1921 black Broadway show, *Shuffle Along*, which included

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Some greats of jazz & ragtime, identified in Eubie's hand, at Composer's Showcase, 1972.





## DANCING THROUGH THE 50S

By Beverlee Galli Murphy

**F**or thirty-three years the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, New York, held sway for music and dance. When it opened its doors in 1926, it welcomed both the elite and the not-so-elite. As long as they loved music and jazz, they came and kept coming. It weathered well through the 20s and the Charleston and the Black Bottom; the 30s and the Lindy; the 40s and the Boogie Woogie, and on through the later jitterbugging and rock. In toto, 250 Big Bands "stomped the boards" at the Savoy. None even tried in the sixties. The Savoy met the

demolition crew in 1969 and came to an end.

Meanwhile, down in the heart of Manhattan at Madison Square Garden, in the arena the name of the dance was "name your poison." It was fame or fortune or two sore feet. Contests were there to be in, or to watch other people be in. From 1950 until 1955, the Harvest Moon Ball held a "Charleston Contest" though the jitterbugging couples belied any leg to the Roaring Twenties. And in 1956, the Carden management acknowledged the changing times and held a



rock 'n' roll contest. Thereafter all contests ceased.

There were other places where dancing swung free. The Palladium, where the Mambo and its variations held court until 1957, to be usurped by the "hybrid" Cha-Cha, a hybrid of the Mambo and the Rumba. And Roseland, in the heart of New York, still held promise for singles under thirty (until the singles bars of the 60s took over.) All had their contests and prizes, live bands and "ladies' night."

Their organized dances—the Bunny Hop, Mexican Hat Dance, and other foot-fast and "heartstopping dances"—were for everybody—youth and old, father and daughter, mother and son. Dancing was "in" for the lovers. All over the country they were jingling together with hands joined, embracing and hugging and kissing in the dark, one-stepping and swaying to "Good-Night, Ladies" at midnight when both mirror and couples would cease to revolve and the band would pack up and leave.

Not to mention prom night. But when do you hang a corsage? With the strapless tulle formal, it was the waist or wrist. And there were dance bids, with their stark-white space for ten dances (whoever really danced with ten different men? Unless they were Scarlett

O'Hara. Yet their petticoated formals and the pumps dyed to match, made them feel like they were

"Good Night, Sweetheart" came and brought the end of together. The stuff of day-for-us-thing. The underground of the 60s began to blossom from the silent, well-nourished roots of the 50s and puke above ground. Independence was the word. Sex barriers were down. No longer was there a need for pretending. Do it when and where you can. Get it while it's hot. Dancing was an excuse. A no-touch, listen-and-love-in-your-head rock and roll that culminated in the Twist.

Rock 'n' roll and TV grew up side by side, after '56. But let's go further back for a minute. As early as '33 Rock 'n' roll groups were play-

ing the Apollo in Harlem. In 1951, as a matter of fact, Alan Freed, way out in Cleveland, started playing that new innovation based on old rhythm and blues. He'd pound on a phonobook played next to a microphone. Crazy began. In

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# THE LEGENDARY LOVERS

By Bette Martin

On screen they were irresistible to women; in private they were hard to love.



Douglas Fairbanks in *Thief of Baghdad*, above. Opposite page is the famous Barrymore profile.

## Douglas Fairbanks

He'd been as much amused as he was pleased with the Broadway career that won him his first motion picture role, and Douglas Fairbanks, the Harvard-educated son of a Denver lawyer, brought both his unique attitude and talents with him to Hollywood. Some, among them director D. W. Griffith who starred Fairbanks in his first film, *The Lamb*, found him frivolous. Others, like close friend Charlie Chaplin found him remarkable. Audiences loved the handsome, muscular actor who starred in everything from "action" films to comedies.

The success he achieved in pictures like *Manhattan Madness* and *The Americano* was great, but Fairbanks was convinced he could do even better. When his contract was up, he turned down a raise in his ten thousand dollars a week salary (in 1916) to form Douglas Fairbanks Pictures, which was later made part of United Artists.

## John Barrymore

They called him, with good reason, "The Great Profile." In the biographical sense, however, a profile of John Barrymore, most illustrious and notorious member of the American acting family, is one of greatness tempered by tragedy. Born in 1882, he made his stage



debut in 1903 with his sister Ethel in *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines*. An active Broadway career followed, and with it came a love of nightlife and drinking.

In 1913, his movie career began with *An American Citizen* and for several years he combined stage and film work, doing serious plays and light screen comedies.

He was best known for his Shakespearian performances, but his first big movie success came with the movie *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1920. His other great silent movies included *The Sea Beast*, and *Don Juan*. His movie career was to continue into the talkie era, but his private life and the battle he fought with the bottle caused continual tragedy.

Married three times (to poetess Michel Strange, to actress Dolores Costello, and to Elaine Barrie, 30 years younger than himself) Barrymore's romances caused continual sensation in the press.

He made several important sound films, among them *Grand Hotel*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *Rasputin* and *The Empress*, but played lesser roles until his death in 1942.



The *Sheik* was one of Valentino's most famous roles. Bottom left is John Barrymore as Don Juan, and right is Valentino in *Camille*. Page 58 photo from *Blood And Sand*.



He was the first of the screen's dark exotic lovers and the most successful. While women thrilled at Rudy's performances, the men were less receptive.



#### Rudolph Valentino

Sleeked down hair, pencilled eyebrows, and a face more femininely beautiful than ruggedly handsome—Rudolph Valentino, nee Rudolpho Alfonzo Raffaello Pierre Filibert Guglielmi di Valentina d'Antonguella, took the flamboyance of the Roaring Twenties and remolded it in his own image.

The Italian-born son of a once prosperous family, Valentino came to America after failing at attempts at a military career in his native country. In America, his love of luxury and nightlife soon found him moving from his original position as a gardener to chic nightspots where he danced professionally—and soon he developed a successful side profession of taking gifts, cash and otherwise, from society women who swooned at his feet.

Local police took a somewhat dimmer view of the immigrant dancer, and Rudy made his way west, dancing in musicals. In Hollywood, his first jobs were as an extra in such films as *Alimony*, and bit parts in *A Married Virgin* and *A Society Sensation* among others.

Success came when he did his famous tango in *The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse*, and soon Valentino films were being rushed out, with *Uncharted Seas*, *Camille* (with Nazimova) and *The Conquering Power* following.

Valentino's greatest success was achieved with *The Sheik*, a romantic tale that starred him opposite Agnes Ayres, introduced a new word into popular slang, and set millions of feminine hearts beating faster. While women thrilled at Rudy's performances in *Blood And Sand*, *Monsieur Beaucaire*, and *The Eagle*, the American male was somewhat less receptive to the Valentino mystique. He was taunted and teased in the press, and, on one occasion, denounced in a Chicago newspaper editorial as "The Pink Powderpuff."

In his private life, Valentino was as tepid as he was on screen. A marriage to Jean Ackler ended on the couple's wedding night. The



Ramon Novarro is seen in *The Student Prince*, right.

#### Ramon Novarro

Best remembered for his performance as the Ben Hur of the silent screen, Ramon Novarro was a lover in the Valentino tradition—a fact the studios often tried to reinforce by casting him in carbon copies of Valentino's films. Fighting to maintain his own image, Novarro established his identity with such roles as *The Student Prince* and *The Midshipman*, and he was one of the few silent idols to make a successful transition to talkies, starring in *In Gay Madrid*, *Son-Deughter*, and *Mata Hari* among others.

In time, his star declined, and Ramon Novarro went into semi-retirement, living off his real estate investments. In the late 40s, he began to appear in Westerns and in character roles, and in the next decade he did guest spots on television. A bachelor all his life, his murder by two youths in the late 1980s created a scandal with homosexual overtones—a tragic end to his long career.

strange, strong-willed Natacha Rambova became the second Mrs. Valentino, though to many the union seemed the base of a ménage including Nazimova, another screen exotic. In 1926, while in New York, Valentino was rushed to a hospital with a bleeding ulcer. Pola Negri, who claimed she and Rudy were "engaged" (his marriage to Rambova was ended) rushed to her lover's side, as did several chorus girls with similar claims. None could be honored—"The Sheik" died, two hundred thousand dollars in debt.

#### Francis X. Bushman

The "X" was for Xavier, but Francis X. Bushman, who made his screen debut in 1911 after working as a sculptor's model, was called the "Ideal Man" and "America's Most Handsome Man" in studio press releases. His early success in the 1915 version of *Romeo and Juliet* starring opposite Beverly Bayne, led to an appearance at



Francis X. Bushman in *Ben Hur*, his last major appearance.

that year's World's Fair in San Diego, where he was crowned "King Of The Movies."

He had a leading role in Ramon Novarro's *Ben Hur* and it was to be his last major screen appearance. Though always remembered by his

loyal public, Bushman's feuds with Hollywood powers such as Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM, created a gap of animosity which could not be bridged. He died in 1966, a veteran of the movies' age of innocence.







# WOMEN'S WORK AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

By David Tablaquah

**"I**f you want fresh eggs all winter and you object to paying 45¢ and more a dozen for them, why just follow these simple directions furnished by Mrs. Joseph Ellms, President of the National Co-operative Housewives' League, who pickles eggs now, declaring that they will be 'strictly fresh' at Christmas time.

"Mrs. Ellms has been preserving eggs for years and says they will easily keep six months and more in this solution and be as good then as on the day they were preserved.

"Mrs. Ellms purchases at a drug store a quantity of silica sodium solution, known as 'water glass' which costs 40 cents a gallon. Then she boils 10 pints of water, in order to sterilize it, when it has cooled, adds one pint of 'water glass.' This amount of solution is enough to cover 12 dozen



No kitchen was complete without a rolling pin, and the culinary art of cookie-making was a well-appreciated one.

Americans at the turn of the century felt they were living in a very good present, but there was lots of room for improvement. For one thing, women had not yet won the right to vote.



The wonderful sewing machine worked with ease on goods of any thickness by 1900, and a lady's wardrobe was often entirely homemade.



Summer at the farm or seashore meant laundry in the tub with rainwater, soap and plenty of elbow grease.

eggs, which she puts in a four-gallon crock. Place the crock in a cool place, preferably in the cellar and cover it to keep out dust and to prevent rapid evaporation. Your eggs are now preserved.

"When you want fresh eggs all you have to do is to go down in the cellar and gather a few from the crock.

"I obtained the recipe from the United States Agricultural Department. It is the cheapest that can be procured," said Mrs. Ellins.

"The housewife must be sure to boil the water before putting in the solution. You can mix up any amount of the preservative so long



A quiet evening at home, reading and sewing by lamplight.



baking and canning; buying new hats; and above all else working for self-improvement. Women were going to college in increasing numbers, and in other fields the girls were breaking the rigid molds of tradition. They were even trying to get the rights of a first-class citizen—among which was the right to vote. But a Methodist bishop gave the word to his people: Civ-

ing women the vote would deprive a man of "his glory to represent her. To rob him of that right would weaken both." It was a futile effort on the part of the bishop and others to halt the movement, for their cause was won just in time to vote in the 1920 election. Women even (eventually) won the right to smoke in public, a few decades before it became a health hazard.

as you keep the proportions, one part 'water glass' to 10 parts of water. Buy your eggs in the spring time for spring eggs are the cheapest and be sure you get fresh eggs to start with." (Written circa 1900)

There were other things for a woman to do in the early 20th Century besides pickling eggs, as the accompanying pictures clearly illustrate: laundry work outdoors in the old tub; trying to figure out the complicated new machine which did your sewing for you;



Above, Valli Valli, a celebrity of the day tries on a new Easter hat. Right, women suffragists at a Civic Club meeting.

# BETTY GRABLE: MOTHER KNEW BEST

By Walter H. Hogan

The photograph of Betty Grable that was part of the kit of millions of GIs during World War Two has remained the most famous pinup of all time.

With some talent (her own) and much determination (mostly her mother's), Betty Grable laid siege to that fortress of fortune called Hollywood at the ripe old age of twelve. After a visit there the year before when they'd toured film studios, the Grables—mother and daughter (Mr. Grable stayed in Saint Louis to provide for them)—arrived in California to stay in the spring of '29. Mrs. Grable enrolled Betty as a student

thoughts of her acting ambitions when she married Conn Grable. And she was further frustrated when her hopes for a surrogate career were resisted by her first daughter, Marjorie. So she concentrated on her second daughter, Ruth Elizabeth. (Betty.)

Before she was five, Betty was enrolled in a dancing school for toe, tap, and ballet dancing; she also took voice lessons and learned to play the saxophone. "I don't

took her to a Fox Films' casting call for singers and dancers. Despite her youth (Betty, born December 18, 1916, upped her age to avoid problems with California labor laws), she was selected.

Her mother knew she would be. "It was like a poker game in which you know you're holding four aces," Mrs. Grable said later of Betty's movie start. "I knew Betty had what they wanted."

For her screen debut, Betty was lost in a crowd of 60 chorus girls in *Let's Go Places*. After one more film, Fox discovered her age and she was let go. But Betty was hooked. "I had learned a lot about movies and what made them move. I knew that experience would be mighty helpful. I made up my mind to see to that."

Cosmetics could age her face, yes, but Mother Nature hadn't yet done her part to make a dancer's scanty costumes look right. Then Sam Goldwyn put out a casting call for singers and dancers. Betty became a Goldwyn girl, signed to a five-year contract. She appeared in Mary Pickford's *Kiki* and three movies starring Eddie Cantor—*Whoopie*, *Palm Days*, and *The Kid from Spavin*. Then Goldwyn, giving no reason, dropped her.

Betty was still eight years away

## GRABLE ON GRABLE

*"As a dancer, I couldn't outdance Ginger Rogers or Eleanor Powell. As a singer, I'm no rival to Doris Day. As an actress, I don't take myself seriously. I had a little bit of looks yet without being in the big beauty league. Maybe I had sincerity. And warmth. Those qualities are essential. I don't think I've ever had a good review. My films didn't get them either. Yet they did very well at the box office."*

*"I never really wanted a career. I know you don't believe that, but it's true. Basically, I'm a very lazy girl, but Mother made me work hard and I was finally lucky. I made it big. I learned to know what it's like up there at the top, and I liked it. I'm glad I had it."*

at the Hollywood Professional School and had her take additional training at the Albertina Rasch School and the Ernest Belcher Dance Academy.

"I had a stage mother to end all stage mothers," Betty once told an interviewer. "She pushed me into the limelight ever since I can remember."

There was a reason for the pushing. Lillian Hoffman had given up

think I missed a thing except eccentric dancing. I dreaded every lesson and I especially hated acrobatics." She also hated the impromptu recitals her mother urged her to give to entertain people. "I wouldn't do it. I died at the thought of it." But she practiced long on the dance platform Mrs. Grable had in their apartment.

And in Hollywood in 1930, she tried just as hard when her mother

A pre-Flash Gordon Buster Crabbe appeared with Betty in 1937's *Thrill of a Lifetime*.





Betty did a lively number called "Fidgety Joe" in Jack Benny's *Man About Town* (1939).

from the point when financial lightning would strike both her and 20th Century-Fox. Before that there were contracts and films at RKO and Paramount. She appeared in Wheeler and Woolsey comedies, began a film career as a coed in *Sweetheart of Sigma Chi*, played bits in comedies directed by Fatty Arbuckle, and sang torch songs with the Ted Fio Rito band. The first time she was really noticed was when she did a comic dance number called "K-Knock Knees" with Edward Everett Horton in the 1934's *The Gay Divorcee*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. In the same dance team's 1936 picture, *Follow The Fleet*, Betty got sixth billing.

Betty's first film at Paramount was *Collegegate* in 1936, with Joe Penner and Jack Oakie, Ned Sparks and Frances Langford; Betty got fifth billing. Then in 1938 when

she was appearing in *Give Me a Sailor* with Bob Hope and Martha Raye, Hollywood artists took a vote and named Betty as the girl with the most beautiful figure on screen.

Mother Nature had done a thorough job: At a height of five feet, three-and-a-half inches, Betty weighed 112 pounds on a figure that measured 34-23-35. And her famous legs were comprised of an 18½-inch thigh, 12-inch calf, and a 7½-inch ankle above a size 5 shoe.

"There might have been more shapely legs, longer legs, more beautiful legs," wrote Jerry Oster in *The New York Daily News* on July 4, 1973, "but hers were The Legs, The Million Dollar Legs."

"Grable's gams its chief assets," wrote one reviewer of her 1951 film, *Meet Me After the Show*. In a 1963 issue of *Screen Facts*, Gene Ringgold wrote: "Betty Grable's legs are among the pleasures of the world." Yet Betty, whose legs were molded in concrete at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, thought Marlene Dietrich's legs were better. But she

would often tell interviewers: "There are two reasons I'm in show business. And I'm standing on both of them."

When Paramount made another campus caper picture in 1939 called *Million Dollar Legs*, the title didn't refer to her legs but to those of the team coached by Buster Crabbe. Betty got top billing over Crabbe and Jackie Coogan, whom she'd married on her 21st birthday on Dec. 18, 1937. On January 1, 1939, Betty separated from Coogan, and her divorce became final in 1940, the same year her parents were divorced.

Paramount ended Grable's contract in 1939. She was then earning \$500 a week. What did Betty decide? "Something had to be done or I would be a promising youngster until I was a grandmother." So she went on the stage circuit, earning up to \$1,500 weekly.

Jack Haley, who'd co-starred with her in *Pigskin Parade*, signed Betty for a two-week stint with him at the San Francisco Exposition. When he saw her picture in a Los Angeles paper, Fox studio head Darryl F. Zanuck said, "This girl has qualities we missed here."

Goldwyn said, "I had that girl under contract once. I wonder why I never did anything with her."

And an RKO producer said, "She was cuter than most imitation coeds whipping around the lot. But her cuteness didn't seem to mean anything. When she appeared, there were a few whistles but nothing to burst your eardrums. Although she was nicely stacked, you could look at her all day without raising your temperature one degree."

Well, she raised Buddy DeSylva's in San Francisco. When the writer-producer saw her performance there, he offered her a role in a new musical he was planning for Broadway. To her "I've never been on the stage before," DeSylva replied: "That's Broadway's loss."

She became Broadway's gain when she appeared with fourth billing to Ethel Merman, Bert Lahr and Benny Baker in Cole Porter's *DuBarry Was a Lady*, which opened at the 46th Street Theatre in New York on Dec. 6, 1939. The show was a resounding hit. The review of Richard Watts, Jr. in the *New York Herald Tribune* said: "Miss Betty Grable, the 'movie

"I had a stage mother to end all stage mothers. She pushed me into the limelight ever since I can remember." Betty once told an interviewer.



girl," is pictorially helpful, which is no doubt all that is necessary for her to be in this particular case," Walter Winchell's column in the *Daily Mirror* said: "...there is Betty Grable's vivacious hoofing and pretty face and figure to make up for the draggy story. Miss Grable's numerous appearances do so much to relieve matters." And five days after the show opened, Betty's picture was on the cover of *Life* magazine.

Hollywoodites were very pleased that one of their own had made it on the Broadway stage. "Hollywood has a way of letting you down that is rather discouraging," Betty told an interviewer in February of 1940. "I guess the only rea-

Betty settled for love and forest ranger Rory Calhoun in *How To Succeed In Love* (1933).

son I'm in a Broadway show now is that the films didn't want me. It comes something like a shock to you after you've worked in several studios and have been publicized around the country for years, suddenly to realize there are no available roles for you."

Four months later there was. Appendicitis was the reason. Appendectomies certainly played their part in Betty's career. In 1939 when she was slated to have the lead opposite Jack Benny in *Man About Town*, Betty had appendicitis, so Dorothy Lamour got the role. Even so, Betty was used in the film in a number called "Fidgety Joe." Then, because Alice Faye had appendicitis, Betty was called back to Hollywood on June 3, 1940 by Zanuck to take over Faye's role opposite Don Ameche in *Down Argentine Way*.

Betty was delighted. "This is the



Alice Faye, Billy Gilbert, and Betty Crable in "The Sheik of Araby" production number from *Tin Pan Alley* (1940).

first time I ever got a chance to do good parts in the movies," she said, "and if I mess this up now I'll have only myself to blame... I never will be the Garbo type. There's nothing mysterious about me."

So finally—after ten years and 31 movies—Betty Crable began the career her mother had counted on.

Down Argentine Way "had color, songs, and exotic locales," said *50 Super Stars*, a large spiral-bound book compiled by John Kodal, "and more of the same followed, all enormously popular. The pattern was set for the exotic locales: a trip down south or backstage musical show with romance thrown in, and plenty of costume sparkle and glitter."

Zanuck immediately co-starred Betty and Alice in *Tin Pan Alley*, directed by Walter Lang. "Tin Pan Alley was fun, because Alice Faye had been on the lot and made several pictures before it," said

Lang in an interview by Joel Greenberg in *Focus on Film*, issue of Summer, 1974. "It was, however, the first time I worked with Betty Crable. She and Alice worked perfectly together..."

Lang directed Betty's next picture, 1941's *Moon Over Miami*, of which Hollywood in the Forties by Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg said: "Perhaps the most striking feature of the film is how much it is ahead of its time, predating *On The Town*, which in many ways resembles it in its use of free dancing through sets and locations. When the three women [Crable, Carole Landis and Charlotte Greenwood] arrive at their Miami hotel, they dance right across their suite singing with delightful enthusiasm, 'Oh me, Oh Mi-ami'... this is a film of irresistible American energy and verve, orchestrated to perfection by Alfred Newman, electrifyingly recorded, especially in the 'Conga to a Nursery Rhyme' number expertly danced by Betty Crable and the chorus in a hotel lounge."

"Miss Crable is a range of pretty

and petulant moods. And how her moods photograph!" said one New York critic of *Moon Over Miami*, in which Crable was one of three girls seeking millionaire husbands.

"That was a favorite plot at 20th," wrote David Shipman in *The Great Movie Stars*, "and it established Crable as a fairly mercenary charmer, on the make career-wise if nothing else."

Betty's next picture in '41 co-starred her with Tyrone Power in *A Yank in the R.A.F.*, written by Darryl Zanuck under a pseudonym. Betty was an American chorine stranded in London for the war. Then came a straight dramatic role in an offbeat murder mystery, *I Wake Up Screaming*.

The reviews were lukewarm for her, so it was back to a musical to start '42, *Footlight Serenade*, with John Payne and Victor Mature.

Although Technicolor added one-third to a film's budget, Fox decided it was worth the difference at the box office on a Crable picture. One Fox executive said of blonde, blue-eyed Betty: "Her hair and skin are perfect for this kind of presentation, and when she waves her hips in a color film she does it a favor." She did that favor for *Song of the Islands*, co-starring Victor Mature. When they were in Chicago on a tour with the movie, Betty met Harry James, who was to become her husband on July 11, 1943 in Las Vegas, and the father of her two daughters, Victoria Elizabeth (March 4, 1944) and Jessica (May 20, 1947).

Harry James and his band appeared in 1942's *Springtime in the Rockies*, which had another special meaning for Betty: Top billing for the first time. Also in the movie were John Payne, Carmen Miranda, Cesar Romero, and Helen Forrest, who sang "I Had the Craziest Dream," used by Betty and Harry James later on personal appearance tours.

In 1942, "Betty was named by the *Motion Picture Herald* as number eight of the top-ten moneymaking stars. She would be number one in 1943 and remain on the list through 1951," wrote James Robert Parish in *The Fox Girls*. "She was no longer afraid to show her anger at the studio when things did not go right. 'I can get good and mad when I think I'm being rooked. I'd done three musicals



In 1967, when Betty appeared on Broadway in *Hello, Dolly*, crowds of admirers waited with that famous pin-up in their hands, hoping for an autograph.

#### COMMENTS ON GRABLE

"... Grable was a great performer. She projected good times and good health and a supremely, indomitably American, faith that the future was ray for all girls who buckled down and learned how to become a lady."

— William Mootz, *The Louisville Courier-Journal*

"A staple Fox commodity, Betty was the dessert of the Technicolor screen. No one claimed she possessed great talent but few people bypassed her attractive musicals. Her success was quite simple: Look like the hottest floozie in town but really turn out to be the good-natured girl next door waiting for the right guy to come along."

— Gene Ringgold, *Screen Facts*

"Her trick is the ability to portray a packet-sized red-hot mama who at the same time promises the kind-hearted camaraderie and unimpeachable morals of a Girl Scout."

— Writer Pete Martin

"Betty is a very normal girl. She's like any average American girl who makes a million a year."

— Betty's mother

and I still had to climb up to a second-floor dressing room. I got sore enough to ask for one on the ground floor and I get insulting when somebody tries to suck me in on a publicity stunt. I've had enough of those in my life."

Betty's other picture in '43 was *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*, which, said famed critic James Agee in *The Nation* of Oct. 8, 1943, "has some fairly pretty color and sets (1890), a few glimpses of Betty Grable's facade, and the power to remind you that the right director... could make wonderful use of her."

*Sweet Rosie O'Grady* will always be remembered for something else: a publicity still of her in a white bathing suit looking over her shoulder. Betty said the famous snapshot was never intended to be a public release; it was supposed to be featured in a movie issue of the *Police Gazette*. But the publicists couldn't bring themselves to bury the "insignificant" still in the files, to the delight of GIs the world over.

Wrote Jerry Oster in *The Daily News* on July 4, 1973: "The pose was more cute than provocative;

the over-the-shoulder glance was more 'hi, there!' than 'come-hither'; the bathing suit had enough fabric to do a dress for

these days.

"Yet for all its propriety—or maybe because of it—the photograph of Betty Grable that was part of the kit of millions of GIs during World War II has remained perhaps the most famous pin-up of all time."

"When World War II was won," said an article entitled "She Shined Even in Darkness" in *Rona Barrett's Hollywood* magazine of November, '73, "Betty Grable's sexy girl-next-door appeal was usurped by a steamier, hotter-blooded sex appeal of a big bosom and lusty sighs."

And in that lineage of 20th Century-Fox blondes, it was time for the crown to pass again, the crown that went from Faye to Grable to Monroe. Monroe's biographer Maurice Zolotow reported that Grable said to Marilyn: "Honey, I've had it. Go get yours. It's your turn now." Later, Monroe took over Grable's dressing room.

"I really liked Marilyn. She was

A dubious Betty shows her legs to William Frauley in 1947's *Mother Wore Tights*.



## FILMS OF BETTY GRABLE

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|--|--|
| 1930: Let's Go Plaren, New Movie-tone Follies of 1930, Whoopie   | 1941: Moon Over Miami, A Yank in the R A F., I Wake Up Screaming         |
| 1931: Kiki, Palmy Days   | 1942: Footlight Serenade, Song of the Islands, Springtime in the Rockies |
| 1932: The Greeks Had a Word for Them, The Kid from Spain, Child of Manhattan, Probation, Hold 'Em Jail | 1943: Coney Island, Sweet Rosie O'Grady                                  |
| 1933: Cavalcade, Sweetheart of Sigma Chi, Melody Cruise, What Price Innocence?                         | 1944: Four Jills in a Jeep, Pin-Up Girl                                  |
| 1934: By Your Leave, Student Tour, The Gay Divorcee  | 1945: Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe, The Dolly Sisters                  |
| 1935: The Nitwits, Old Man Rhythm  | 1946: Do You Love Me?  |
| 1936: Collegiate, Follow the Fleet, Pigskin Parade, Don't Turn 'Em Loose                               | 1947: The Shocking Miss Pilgrim, Mother Wore Tights                      |
| 1937: This Way Please, Thrill of a Lifetime  | 1948: That Lady In Ermine, When My Baby Smiles at Me                     |
| 1938: College Swing, Give Me a Sailor, Campus Confessions  | 1949: The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend                             |
| 1939: Man About Town, Million Dollar Legs, The Day the Bookies Wept                                    | 1950: Wabash Avenue, My Blue Heaven                                      |
| 1940: Down Argentine Way, Tin Pan Alley  | 1951: Call Me Mister, Meet Me After the Show                             |
|  | 1953: The Farmer Takes a Wife, How To Marry a Millionaire                |
|  | 1955: Three for the Show, How To Be Very Very Popular                    |

a good kid," Betty told Jeanne Basinger, lecturer in American Film history at Wesleyan University, who wrote a tribute to Betty in *The New York Times* on July 15, 1973. "She'd come over and I'd cook her a steak." It was typical of

Betty that, with a few simple words, she could reduce two of the world's biggest sex symbols down to a couple of kids who ate steak together after a hard day at the office.

Betty's last two films were released in 1955: *Three for the Show* and *How to Be Very Very Popular*. Betty thought her last film dreadful, said Parish.

Betty teamed with blonde Sheree North for her last film, *How To Be Very Very Popular* (1955).



Betty had said, "If I slip, nobody will have to sit up nights trying to figure out a way to keep me there. I'll get out while I'm still champ."

So she retired from films at 39—but what a champ! Her appearance for 10 consecutive years among the top box-office stars (four of them the top female draw) has never been surpassed. Her movies of the '30s and '40s grossed more than \$100,000,000. And she herself earned at least \$3,000,000 in her career. In 1946-47 the Treasury Department listed her as the highest salaried American woman. And she got 10,000 fan letters a week at her peak.

But Betty kept busy. In mid-'56 she opened a nightclub act in Las Vegas wearing costumes said to cost \$47,000. Later she played the Moulin Rouge in Hollywood, headlined the Auto Show in Memphis, did a club stint in Miami and a Puerto Rican tour. She opened at New York's Latin, Quarter in 1959.

In late '62 she opened at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas in a condensed version of *Cups and Dolls*, co-starring Dan Dailey. Notices were so good, the show was extended well into '63. Betty scored a personal triumph as Miss Adelaide, the role Samuel Goldwyn had wanted for her in the film. She also did *Born Yesterday*.

Betty got a divorce from James on Oct. 7, 1964. She was then 47, and preparing for her stage role in *Hello, Dolly*. William Mootz, theater critic of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, liked her Dolly second only to Channing.

Grable told Mootz: "I've had the movies and it was great. But in the past two weeks I've had four standing ovations playing Dolly. It really shakes me, just to think about it. Really, I'm not hamming you. It's the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me."

In 1969, she starred in the disastrous *Belle Starr* in London (16 performances), but she got warm personal notices, more for what she was than what she did. In 1972, she had to cancel an appearance in Australia in "No, No, Nanette," because of illness.

Betty died of lung cancer on July 2, 1973 at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica at the age of 56. She was survived by her sister, two daughters, and four grandchildren.



# COWBOY PHILOSOPHER

By Ron Fry

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**Will Rogers was no respecter of persons. He poked fun at everybody when he saw fit.**

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**N**o one ever had quite the hold on the American people that Will Rogers did. Nearly forty years after his death, they still recall the guileless grin, the easy, soft-spoken manner, and above all, the artful way he said some pretty profound things, cloaking them in his spiteless humor. Mention his name to one of his contemporaries, they'll smile, perhaps recalling a Rogers story tucked away with the other happy memories.

He was, in the first place, a direct link to the "original Americans"—the Indians—and to the pioneering frontier spirit that is so much a part of our national heritage. And it is somehow fitting that his death, untimely though it was, should come when the United States was just beginning to taste the power and responsibility of world leadership.

The early years of the man who would later gain international fame and recognition as the "Cowboy Philosopher" were not really so very unusual. William Penn Adair Rogers, named for his father Clem's Civil War comrade and close friend, was born on November 4, 1879 in Oologah, part of the Cheyenne Nation that later became the state of Oklahoma.

In nearly every respect, Will Rogers' boyhood was a perfect model of the nostalgic ideal of growing up in the nineteenth century. While life on the rapidly changing frontier was simple, it was immensely rich as well, full of the bygone joys of rural America. Willie, as everyone called him, learned to ride and rope nearly before he learned to walk. His youth was a carefree apprenticeship in the rapidly vanishing arts of the fabled West.

By the time he was ready for school, the first faint glimmerings of his native wit and natural prankishness had become more than a little apparent. In elocution class, students recited classic orations: Hamlet's soliloquy; Patrick Henry's "liberty or death" speech, replete with textbook gestures. Will could never resist an opportunity to wrestle a laugh from his new-found audience; his impeccable sense of timing and emphasis would often break up the class—and send the teacher into some mild hysterics of her own. As one of his fellow students later recalled, "He'd torture his face 'til it looked like a wrinkled saddle blanket, make funny motions with his hands and roll his eyes. . . I never saw him get up in front of a class without making them laugh before he sat down."

Because he elected to express himself in ungrammatical English,

*The native wit and natural prankishness shined through the sly smile.*





Will Rogers and Betty arrive in New York from Europe in September of 1934.

many believed he had had little or no formal education. As a matter of fact, his parents, both of whom had Cherokee Indian blood in their veins, were fairly well-to-do. As a boy, he was sent first to the Willie Haisell College at Vinita, Oklahoma, and later to Kemper Military Academy.

Will spent two years at Kemper—"one in the guardhouse and one in the fourth grade" he noted—but decided school wasn't for him by the time he turned eighteen. He left for Texas, abandoning over one hundred and fifty hours of unfulfilled guard duty. He was, he declared, "finished with the entire school business for life."

The next few years were for working and traveling. He started with "Colonel" Zach Mulhall's traveling circus as one of the few legitimate cowboys in the "genuine" Wild West Show. While with Mulhall, he made his first after-dinner speech. After a steer-roping contest in San Antonio, he was invited to a local barbeque and was asked to speak, just as he was

"stacking in the grub."

He got to his feet, blinked, scratched his head and stammered, "Well, folks, this is a mighty fine dinner, what there is of it."

Later, recalling the laughter that greeted his remarks, he said, "I saw I wasn't going so good, so I said, trying to cover up, 'Well, there is plenty of it, such as it is.'"

The speech was a success.

He ended up in 1902 with Texas Jack's Wild West Circus billed as the Cherokee Kid—the Man Who Can Lasso the Tail off a Blowfly. He was earning the princely sum of \$20 per week. In two years with Texas Jack, he traveled 50,000 miles, temporarily satisfying his wanderlust. He headed home: "I started out first class, dropped to second class, and came home third class. But when I was companion to those cows on that perfumed voyage to Africa, it might be called no class at all."

Will was not made for the ranch and was soon on the road again. On June 12, 1905, he broke into a new trade—show business. Just

how he did it has all the elements of the classic saga: the stage-struck rube arrives in the big city, receives some publicity as a result of performing some heroic feat (in this case, roping a nervous, half-crazed steer that had run amok in Madison Square Garden), but is turned down by booking agents who can't imagine his act going over. Finally, he overhears one of the agents telephoning Keith's Union Square Theatre and saying, "Put this nut and his pony on at the supper show and get rid of them." Not only does the rube get the job, but to everyone's surprise, (including his own) the act goes over, he is an immediate success, and he heads for fame and his name in lights.

By 1914, Will Rogers was married (after a nine-year courtship-by-mail to Betty Blake, and was a headliner with Florenz Ziegfeld's *Follies* and *Midnight Frolic*. After his act failed to excite the audience one night (he was still doing mainly fancy roping tricks) he did a short monologue commenting on some of the headlines he had read in the daily newspaper. It was a raging success and before long, his patter became the high point of his act, with an occasional rope trick thrown in just for variety. As his native wit became more and more apparent—and more and more popular—he began receiving invitations to appear as an "after-dinner speaker." His reputation had just begun to gel; now it would harden quickly.

Will Rogers was perhaps the best after-dinner speaker in the history of the art, an ad-lib comedian who still managed to make serious social comments through the laughs.

He addressed a group of advertising men as the "Robbing Hoods of America" and advised the Association of Woolen Men to stay indoors in case of rain or there would be "about 5,000 men choked to death by their own suits." Leather and shoe men were "brigands and pasteboard high-binders." He told the corset manufacturers just how essential their industry was: "Just imagine, if you can, if the flesh of this country were allowed to wander around promiscuously. Why, there ain't no tellin' where it would wind up!"

Even politicians (one might assert especially politicians) were fair prey for his wit. Introducing Al

"I'm just an old country boy in a big town trying to get along" he once wrote, "...and the reason I have is I have stayed an old country boy."

Smith to the Newspaper Women's Club, he reminded them that Al had gotten his start as a barefoot newspaper boy on the East Side.

"In those days," Will remarked, "there were two professions open to the youth of New York City. One was newsboy and the other, boot-black. Al chose the newsboy as there was no work attached to it. Newsboys all turned out to be politicians and the bootblacks all turned out to be bankers."

Showing no favoritism, he later told a roomful of astonished bankers that borrowing money on easy terms was a one-way ticket to the poorhouse. "If you don't think it is a sucker's game," Will asked, "why is a banker the richest man in town?"

By the early 1920's, Betty was making the railroads rich by constant traveling in order to be near Will. As much as he liked to make jokes about it, their life must have been unbelievably hectic. Will was still playing in the Follies while continuing to grab nearly every after-dinner offer available; and in 1922, he started writing a weekly syndicated newspaper column. By 1923, he had enough. "I have spoken at so many banquets," he explained, "that when I get home I feel disappointed if my wife or one of the children don't get up after dinner and say, 'We have with us this evening a man who, I am sure, needs no introduction.'" He had "talked more and said less in the last few years than any man outside of Public Life."

Besides, it was time to start another career again, this time on the Silver Screen. Within four years, he was the biggest drawing card in motion pictures.

Will Rogers was no respecter of persons. He poked fun at Presidents, crowned heads, members of Congress—at everything and everybody when he saw fit, and made even the victims of his shafts of wit like it, simply because there was never any venom in what he said.

He was by far the most popular American of his day, and among

his very best friends were many who had felt the prick if not the sting of his wit at one time or another. His success as an actor was due to the fact that he never acted. On and off the stage he was merely Will Rogers, the "cowboy philosopher." And a philosopher he most certainly was, even if he usually wrapped his philosophy in a humorous cloak.

Tens of millions of people who had never met him personally considered him their friend, having come to realize that he had a way of speaking for them all. He was a kind of gentle, smiling deputy for everyone who was little or had once been little, and who still had love for and faith in the basic institutions of the country. He succeeded in bringing the affairs of the world into the living rooms of America, as if he were part of the family, making people realize that

the goings on of kings and Presidents were not that different than those of the folks next door.

With all the fame that came his way, he never really changed. He was exactly what he seemed to be. "I am just an old country boy in a big town trying to get along," he once wrote. "I have been eating pretty regular and the reason I have is, I have stayed an old country boy."

In the end, the news of Will Rogers' sudden death in an airplane crash on August 15, 1935 near Point Barrow, Alaska, made the kind of headlines reserved for the world's great. The sense of loss was as keen abroad as it was in the land of his birth.

It was not merely the realization that a friend was gone but that, as one of his friends said, "a smile has disappeared from the lips of America."



Giving his interpretation of the gift-edged boss in one of his film roles in 1930.

## FLYING CINDERELLAS

(Continued from page 47)

and a box of parts and pieces, Jefferies slowly reconstructed the body of the plane in his driveway.

Getting it to Santa Paula was a trip. Jefferies anchored the nose of the Knocker to a trailer hitch on his station wagon, notified the California Highway Patrol and towed the plane at 50mph up the freeway to the airport. Wings followed the body up to Santa Paula a little later, and five years after he had seen his bedraggled Cinderella, John Jefferies taxied her down the air strip and took off. Little planes like that have to be flown by feeling. Dope and fabric pilots sense what a plane is doing every minute. They're not driving an instrument panel, they are handling a light, sensitive, almost alive machine.

"It's a hard sensation to describe," Jefferies said. "That first flight I was glad, anxious, proud, triumphant, I suppose and extremely satisfied."

He flies Sundays, mostly, alone

or with one of his kids. His wife is spooked at the thought of both of them in that small plane with four children on the ground, so she's never been up in it.

With one Cinderella in the hangar, Jefferies is half-seriously looking for another, a Gull Wing Stinson, '38 or '35. A big airplane with a big round engine up front that pleases him because it looks right, the Stinson was called the Cadillac of the air.

"I've loved it since I was a boy and built models," he said.

David Tallchiet went that route, one Cinderella plane at a time and now counts a harem of 40. Sure, he uses them in theme restaurants, but he'd be the first to admit he's still a frustrated co-pilot struggling to get into that left-hand command seat.

Bad eyesight kept him from being a pilot until Pearl Harbor was hit, then he signed up for Cadet training and landed in a co-pilot school in Amarillo, Texas. Of his 21 England-based missions, Tallchiet only says, "I had an inglorious career. I say this because maybe antique planes give me a chance to relive my life in make-believe."

He flew P 51s for the National

Guard after the war, keeping his hand in. By 1957 Tallchiet wanted to try flying civilian planes and started as half owner of a P 22. Then it was his own PT 17, a T 34, P 51. He finally got the left-hand pilot's seat when he bought a B-24 in India and flew it back to England preparing to bring it to the States.

"The B-24 cast more of a shadow on England than it ever did in America," he said. "I felt like that was my 22nd mission, bringing her into the airport. BBC was there with mikes. That was the only B-24 back in England in 25 years."

World War II planes fascinate him, planes that flew in combat. His airplane theme restaurants will tell the story of air combat of that time. Building with heart as well as head, Tallchiet is trying to tie airplanes, pictures like those he saw in the Smithsonian, documentary films of the past, and stills into a show-and-tell of the air activity of WWII and put it into an eating place.

Rescuing those old sweethearts not only gives frustrated airmen a chance to become pilots, but, to hear them tell it, saves an endangered species as well.



## EUBIE BLAKE

(Continued from page 50)

"I'm Just Wild About Harry," "Love Will Find A Way," and "Bandana Days," some of Eubie's best known songs. "Out of 21 songs (in the show), I had 19 hits," said Eubie, warming to the memory. "But Irving Berlin—we called him Izzie; that's what all the Broadway guys called him!—he was a kid, and he wrote 'Alexander's Ragtime Band,' a big hit. I had 19 hits, but he had 21 hits out of 21! He beat me!"

As a member of ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) since 1922, Eubie's substantial royalties for his show tunes have helped support him over the years. He still writes songs, mostly ragtime, but admits that they don't sell as much anymore. "I don't mean to brag," he said, "but if I never play another lick, I'll live

just the same. And I mean good."

Eubie must have been asked hundreds of times about Scott Joplin, but if the question bored him, he didn't show it. "Yes, I met Scott, in Washington. He was very ill. I think it was tuberculosis, but I'm not sure. But he couldn't play."

"There was a colored cabaret on Pennsylvania Avenue, and they gave a party for my first partner, Madison Beed. (This is before Noble Sissle.) I tell colored people that now and they look at me with awe, because Negroes could hardly walk on Pennsylvania Avenue unless they were there on business. And Scott was there negotiating about *Treemonika*, the same opera that's out now. He had heard of me although we had never seen each other. He heard I was in the building, and he sent for me, and I went to his table.

"He could hardly talk, he was that ill. They asked him to play, and he kept saying he couldn't, because he was ill. He played 'Maple Leaf Rag,' and it was

awful. It was pitiful. He couldn't play anymore. A child could have played it that way. I talked to him for about half an hour, and I never saw him again. He was a little fella about my size. I weigh 125 pounds."

Physically, Eubie may be "a little fella," but musically, he's a giant. Although he commands ever more respect as an artist, he still encounters occasional "guilt by association" from persons who should know better. "I've played both classes of music, not just ragtime," he explains with some frustration. "But people still think, 'Oh, he's a ragtimer, a plunker.' On the Johnny Carson Show, for example, Eubie was automatically given an upright piano to perform on, rather than a grand piano—a decision later regretted by the show's management after they had been suitably turned around by Eubie's pianistic dexterity.

"But ragtime is the 'go,'" he smiles, "and I'm sellin' what the people want."



# A MUSICAL HISTORY OF THE MOVIES

(Continued from page 33)

While Warner's was staggering the audience with stunning dance production numbers, RKO was having great success with films such as *Top Hat* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Although the Astaire-Rogers musicals were great fun, they lacked the gloss of the Warner films and the storylines were all very similar. The great dancing along with Irving Berlin music was a sure-fire bet.

1937 also gave the audience another Dick Powell, military setting film. In *Flirtation Walk* he had been a West Point Cadet, and in *Shipmates Forever*, an Annapolis midshipman. Ruby Keeler had co-starred in both. It was only a question of time before Powell showed up in a Marine uniform. The script required Powell to take the film's title literally, delivering five of the six songs.

*The Singing Marine* is one more musical that hangs on its songs: six from Harry Warren, five with lyrics by Al Dunin, and one by Johnny Mercer. Powell recorded four of them for Decca. "Cause My Baby Says It's So," did particularly well. The Marine Corps officially adopted "The Song of the Marines." (During my two years in the Corps I never heard it. H.J.)

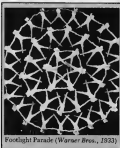
*Varsity Show* and *Hollywood Hotel* were Warner's last gasp in producing lavish musicals. The cycle of the 30s was drawing to a close.

Every genre goes through some kind of an evolution, and the musical is a perfect example. Before Busby Berkeley came on the scene, musicals, as mentioned earlier, had pretty well run out of steam, but still deserve mention. There was *Hollywood Revue*, the all-star frolic with more than a dozen musical numbers; *Show of Shows*, Warner's contribution to the all-star race with practically everyone on the lot participating; *Gold Diggers On Broadway*, with its "Tip-Toe Through the Tulips;" and, among so many others, *The Love Parade* (Maurice Chevalier

and Jeanette MacDonald). Glorifying *The American Girl* (Rudy Vallee and Eddie Cantor), *Solly* (Marilyn Miller), *The Singing Fool* (Johnson once again), *Rio Rita* (Bebe Daniels and John Boles).

By the end of the 30s the musical was beached, but it would survive. World War II gave the studios a new breath of life—a cause.

Remember all those star-studded salutes to the "boys overseas?" Star-laden casts cavorted in films like *Star Spangled Rhythm*, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, *Thousands Cheer*, and the super patriotic *This Is The Army*.



Dennis Morgan, playing the Red Shadow, fought the Germans in Warner's remake of *The Desert Song*. This time in stunning color.

The plots of most of the 40s musicals were just about beyond human endurance, but they were great fun with good tunes and plenty of beautiful girls.

The 40s gave the audience a new kind of musical, the gaudy, gorgeous, and sometimes great Technicolor eye-dazzlers with Betty Crable and Alice Faye. These films were produced by 20th Century Fox, who took the musical lead during the war years. There were hits like *Coney Island*; *The Dolly Sisters*; *Hello, Frisco, Hello*; *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*; *The Caggs' All Here* and so many others.

The 40s also spawned the minor musical. There were little gems with Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan, The Andrews Sisters, Jane Frazee and Gloria Jean as well as the more popular Deanna Durbin, Judy Garland, Shirley Temple and Mickey Rooney vehicles.

As the late 40s and early 50s approached, the original movie musical almost completely vanished. Studios simply reverted back to buying the rights to successful Broadway shows. However, we did have the colorful underwater displays of Esther Williams (*Neptune's Daughter*, *Easy To Love*, *Bathing Beauty*, *Pagan Love Song*, etc.) Doris Day became a household word. Fred Astaire and Gene Kelly were still in top form, but the old magic was gone.

It might be fair to say that the last really great Hollywood musical was *Singing In The Rain*. Gene Kelly recaptured the magic of the late 20s and early 30s in this elaborate MGM production. *Singing In The Rain* is almost the perfect musical. The spoof on the transition from silent films to the early creaky "talkies" is hilarious, with Kelly high stepping from silent swashbuckler to song and dance star.

*Singing In The Rain* was also the big break for Debbie Reynolds. She had appeared in three films up to that date, but *Singing In The Rain* made her a major star. Her role in the movie was not unlike what she had been doing since her arrival in Hollywood.

Kelly did a masterful job of arranging the dance numbers, and the use of color photography was never better employed.

The 50s also gave us great movies like *Shoeshoe*, also from MGM, with a terrific cast and songs by Jerome Kern, and Kelly starred in *An American In Paris*, but the movie musical was on the way out.

Musicals, like most elaborately-mounted vehicles, were becoming too expensive to produce. During the entire decade of the 60s only a handful were made, and most were forgettable.

Will the Hollywood musical make a spectacular return? Hardly, with today's economic pressures. But old movie musicals are better than ever. One New York cinema runs only re-issues of American musicals to a packed house regularly. And, of course, there is MGM's great anthology *That's Entertainment* which has been packing them in for several months.

And perhaps a great revival led by another inventive genius like Busby Berkeley may take place and surprise us all.



## DANCING THROUGH THE 50S

(Continued from page 53)

'52 his audience was primarily black; by '54, whites predominated. In 1955 "Rock Around The Clock" by Bill Haley & the Comets sold three million copies.

Elvis Presley and his hips swirled into town, and his hillbilly, gospel and blues "rockabilly" rhythm had all teen-agers rocking and "buying." For now, in the postwar fifties, the teens were more independent and affluent than they had ever been before. And as post-depression war-babies they wiped out their parents' guilt by having and spending what their parents had never had. And they made the new world out of music.

Radio and TV were never at odds. What helped one helped the other. In both cases, music was for listening. Getting involved in your own special world. Dancing was only for private, Vicarious rhythm was the thrill. Watching Elvis or watching others. Dick Clark's *American Bandstand* came after 1957 and the radio DJ shows came into their own too. Nothing but music—for the first time.

Rock and Roll—the Madison, Birdland, Bop and Jet, The Fright and the Freeze and the Monkey. The Roach. A never-ending cycle of sign language signaled from inside oneself. Tailored for juke, rhythm and blues updated. Danceable rhythm. Then Chubby Checker. The Twist and the Peppermint Lounge, 1960. The jet-set takes over. It was the end of the 50s.

## CIRCUS!

(Continued from page 18)

McGregor, Iowa in the 1860's and were captivated by the arrival of a small circus by riverboat. From that moment on, they were determined that they would eventually run a show of their own. They started young, putting on neighborhood shows for a penny admission. They grew up and moved to Baraboo, Wisconsin where they set up Ringling Brothers Carnival of Fun. But what really started their meteoric rise to success was their acquisition of the grand-daddy of the Big Top. The Ringlings bought out Barnum & Bailey after Bailey's death in 1906. The show just wasn't the same without their combined genius, and in 1907, Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows was launched. Billed as the "Greatest Show On Earth," it made its debut in New York's Madison Square Garden in 1919.

But by the end of the 1920's, it looked as if the heyday of the Big Top was drawing to a close. As popular as it was in large cities, the circus in America was geared primarily for the small-town and rural audience. Before movies and radio brought easily accessible entertainment to the hinterlands, the circus was the only form of amusement the people had. Vaudeville and burlesque were OK if you lived in a city big enough to have a theatre to stage them in. The circus, however, could erect its tents in any large outdoor space

that was available—and rural America was never lacking in open spaces. But now, most Americans had access to both radios and movie houses, and it seemed as if the circus was fast becoming just a quaint hold-over from the past century. By the time John Ringling, the last of the original brothers, died in 1936, the show was heavily in debt with little hope of getting out of the red. When his nephew, John Ringling North, inherited the ownership of the show, it was some time before he scraped enough money together to get the circus back on its feet. Things were beginning to look good until 1944 when tragedy struck. That summer, when the show was playing in Hartford, Connecticut a disastrous fire—the worst in circus history—left 143 people dead and cost the show a great part of its assets in numerous damage suits and criminal charges. But by the end of the 40's, under North's management, the show bounced back again and was doing as well as ever.

Today, the circus still retains its popularity, and shows no signs of dying out. There have been changes since the days of the old Big Top. The Hartford fire made circus owners aware of the safety hazards of canvas tents, and in 1956, the Greatest Show On Earth held its last tented performance in Pittsburgh. Since then, almost every circus now performs indoors, which makes for a longer, more profitable season. Circuses are no longer dependent on the vagaries of local weather conditions to break even (a week of rain used to spell financial disaster for even the most successful shows). The season now lasts from early January to mid-November, breaking during the Christmas season for about six weeks. In 1967, North sold his show to the Feld Brothers, show-business entrepreneurs who are now its present owners.

From Rome's Circus Maximus to New York's brand-new ultra-modern Madison Square Garden Center, the circus has been the longest-running show ever. And if it keeps up its admirable record, who knows? The Greatest Show On Earth just might go interplanetary—if there are any weird creatures up there, you can bet you'll see them first at the circus.

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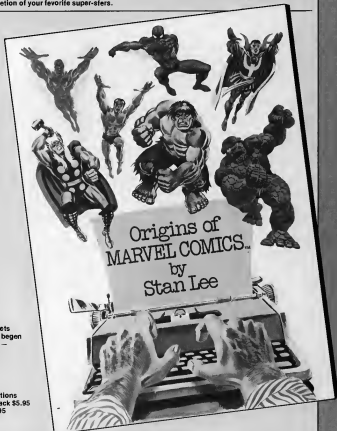
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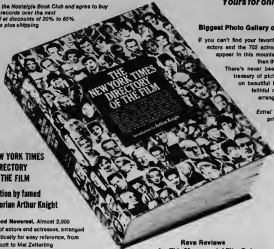
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